

An Important Enquiry; K

OR, THE

NATURE

OF A

CHURCH REFORMATION

FULLY

CONSIDERED:

Wherein is shewn,

From *Scripture, Reason and Antiquity,*

THAT THE

Late *pretended* REFORMATION

Was groundless in the ATTEMPT, and
defective in the EXECUTION.

— *I judge you from your own mouth.*

LUKE ch. ix. v. 22.

— *You have been poised in the ballance, and
are found short of weight. DAN. ch. v.*

L O N D O N :

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AN IMPROVED METHOD

OF THE

ART OF

TEACHING

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AND

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USE

OF



P R E F A C E.

POLEMIC Tracts are become so many and voluminous at this time a-day—the subject has been so thoroughly discussed, and, in a manner, exhausted, that a further attempt on the topic may be deemed an act of temerity and presumption ; but I conceive it to be with books as it is in regard to diet ; and, several Essays on a subject, like different cookeries of the same meat for different palates ; what is unsavory to one man's taste may relish with another's, and a Writing which is not agreeable to this person's way of thinking may sympathize with mine, and from thence will affect and please ; not for that it is better than what had been wrote before, but because it seems, as it were, to be my own.

Upon this hazard I venture to trouble the public with a few reflections on the subject of the much-boasted Reformation, hoping they may have the chance to coincide with the thoughts of some one else. If they meet with this good fortune, and are of service to any one, I shall have attained my aim, and the summit of my ambition.

*Now, as often as I have ruminated on that memorable event, the pretended Reformation, which has been the cause of so great divisions in Christendom within these two centuries and a half, it has always appeared to me, That an examination into this much-boasted performance, from the nature of the thing, according to the most simple and precise idea of it, would be the readiest way to trace its merits, and the most effectual towards terminating all our differences : that is, I conceive that the point to be duly consider'd and thoroughly weigh'd in this matter is, The natural purport or meaning of A religious Reformation ; what exigency there was of one at the time this pretended Reformation was put up, and how that Work has answered this simple idea and the supposed exigency : for, if the Church
could*

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could and did stand in need of a reform at that epoch of time, and if the reformation attempted has answered that end to all intents and purposes, it then, no doubt, carries with it its own merit, and every one must be to blame who does not come into it heartily and sincerely.

But, if it can be proved that the Reformation was both groundless in the attempt and defective in the execution, then the abettors of it ought to renounce their pretensions to this much-magnified merit and arrogated title, and return back to their Mother Church, from which they separated.

For, it is not the plausible name of a thing which should transport us into a precipitate persuasion of its being accompanied with merit ; we see it often fall out in the most material events, as well as in the common occurrences of life, that honorary names take their rise from the most trifling incidents, or, at least, without any just recommendations to them. Thus a military title frequently accrues to a man, and adheres to him for life, from the meanest services : a meer dabbler in physic, and a pretender to

the laws, are indiscriminately complimented with denominations, which, in justice, are only due to the heads of their profession. So, in the case lying before us, there is not a sect ever so contemptible, and even exploded by the more rational part of the reformation, but, as it derives its origin from the same cause, and is grounded on principles avowed by the whole body, in consequence thereto affects to be a member of it, and asserts its right to the pompous title. They are, therefore, merits alone that can call for our attention, or should, in any degree, influence our judgment.

*The merits then, of the Reformation, are what I presume to take upon me to enquire into in the following Sheets; and, in venturing on this undertaking, I beg leave to observe, That I have no particular National Church in my eye, any further than it may happen to dissent from us in the respective tenets which may hereafter come under our consideration; nor, strictly speaking, can I be said to attack the Reformation in general: the authors of this Religious Revolution were the aggressors, by declaring war against us; or, rather, by revolting from
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their Mother Church: the abettors of it, ever since, keep open the breach, and support the quarrel; and therefore as often as we may seem to impugn them, we, in fact, are only defending ourselves.

Besides, to consider this matter in another light, inasmuch as we might be glad (I speak secundum hominem, that is, according to the dictates of nature) to have our religion square, as near as possible, with our temporal interests, and the inclinations of flesh and blood, by enjoying one without breaking into the duties of the other, it certainly would highly concern us, in this respect, to be certified of the justice of the Reformation, and to be ascertained of the possibility of salvation within its precincts: For, temporal advantages, and the contentments of nature, are so evidently on the Reformers side, and so absolutely precluded from the members of the Catholic Communion, that a man must be wholly blind to his own interest not to be inclined to give the former the preference, if he could do it with equal security to his eternal welfare. For who, for example, could be such a fool to profess himself, within these realms, a member of a church which renders

him obnoxious to the state, the object of general scorn and contempt, and lays him under numerous disadvantages prejudicial to his fortune, if motives of conscience did not retain him in it? Who, again, if his salvation could be insured to him in the Protestant Communion, which makes the road to heaven level and easy, and throws all the thorny difficulties of confession, penance and mortification out of the way, would not readily come into it, rather than toil to the desired term thro' the craggy paths of innumerable self-denials and painful injunctions imposed on the professors of the Catholic Faith? An examination therefore, into the merits of the Reformation, is, in fact, no more than a rational enquiry whether it is safe to conform to it or no; or, at most, it is only setting forth our reasons why it appears to us not to be safe, and why we are held in the old religion, which we assuredly believe to be the Mother Church, possessed of the primitive faith established by Christ, propagated by the Apostles, and, by an invariable tradition, in an uninterrupted succession of lawful pastors, handed down to us; and, by virtue of Christ's indefeasible promise to his Church, (as we shall see hereafter) to continue the same to the end of the world.

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*world. In a word, whatsoever I presume to offer on our behalf at present, or, whatsoever other Catholic controvertists have ever said in defence of the Church's doctrine, against its reforming opponents, is no more than what we are enjoined to do by the first vicar of Jesus Christ and visible head of his Church, St. Peter, who directs us — to be always ready to give an answer to every one that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us. **

I can't conclude this apology for my undertaking without adding a word concerning the method I have pursued in the management of my subject, which by some may, perchance, be judged too loose and declamatory for a Polemic Essay: For this reason I had entertained some thoughts of dividing the following controversies into so many discourses; but since, without giving it this alteration, I flatter myself that I have, under its present dress and character, kept close to the design of my work, and have conducted it through the whole with tolerable method, regularity and perspicuity, I hope it may have the chance of not being disrelished as it is; and that it may, moreover, prove of service to my neighbour, in being edifying to him and instruc-

* PET. I. Epist. ch. 3. v. 13.

*tive. If it is so fortunate as to meet with this desirable success, it is a matter quite indifferent under what appellation it compasses it, whether as a Polemic Essay, or as Discourses. Religion itself comprises this double end, reformation and information, to exhort as well as to instruct; and the same ought to be every controvertist's aim, and therefore conviction is only one part of his task; for, a sterile belief will avail nothing, since the Devils believe and tremble, * but a belief operating by charity is a christian belief.*

To exhort then, as well as to instruct, is the plan I have had in view, and have endeavoured to follow; but, after we have done all that lies in our power, 'tis from heaven we must expect the success we wish for; PAUL sows, APOLLO waters, but GOD gives the increase. †

It is, therefore, from the divine mercy, that I beg for myself and my reader the blessing we mutually have occasion for, viz, that what I have now undertaken for his sake may be of use to him, and that he may be favoured with the grace to make his advantage of it. Amen.

* St. JAMES's Ep. † 1 COR. ch. 3. v. 6.



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WHEN LUTHER rose in open rebellion against his Mother Church, and beat the drum of a general revolt; when (as he himself made a boast of, and the fact is not only confessed, but has been magnified into an Act of the most heroic magnanimity by his adherents ever since) when, I say, he presumed to stand alone against the whole world, that is, against all the visible pre-existent Churches upon earth, in order to model one by his own whims and fancies, the undertaking was so daring, that he was necessitated to look out for the most plausible pretences to give it the colour of a sanction, and to obtain it a tolerable reception from his own deluded proselites :
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for tho' the temporal revenues of the Churches and their costly ornaments for divine service, (thro' the indulgence of this new gospeller, abandoned to the discretionary plunder of avaricious statesmen and wicked princes) were such an agreeable bait as they readily swallowed, and were an effectual means of cleaving them to his interest—tho' a wide field, opened to libertinism, flattered the passions of other dissolute men, and gained them easily to his party, yet the soberer part of mankind was to be brought over by some other stratagem; none more fit to impose on simple unwary minds, and the well-meaning sort of people, than a loud outcry against error and superstition, and a specious attempt upon a godly Reformation. The scheme, no doubt, was plausible; but yet an old antiquated one, under a new name—a stale contrivance, practised by hereticks of every denomination, and of all ages, from the very birth of christianity, who constantly affected to insinuate their errors under the cover of truth.

TRUTH is so amiable, that its greatest enemies, ashamed to appear in their own shape, would affect to become its warmest advocates;

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advocates; and, indeed, a search after truth has always been the great business of human understanding, the proper employment of every rational man, and the duty of a christian. But then, this search, to become successful, ought to be tempered with three essential qualities: it must be *sincere*, *disinterested*, and *unprejudiced*: for want of these requisite qualifications there are found many pretenders to truth, who deviate and stray the widest from it, whilst interest is their bias, and passion their guide, and consequently their quest after it unsincere and disingenuous. The most extravagant opinions that ever made their way into the world, and seized upon mens minds, were ushered in, and imposed upon them, under the colour and mask of truth. This has been particularly notorious in the numerous religious innovations which have been made, from time to time, in matters of faith, the revealed truths.

OUR blessed Lord foretold that this would come to pass, that false prophets would appear, and such as would presume to personate him, in giving themselves out for CHRIST; and he forewarned his disciples

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ples against the impostors, by whom even the just would be in danger of being deceived.

THE Apostles, even within their own Days, saw their blessed master's prediction verified in some degree, and bewailed the consequences of it, the seduction of many deluded souls. But to come to particular and known instances: the Church was no sooner blessed with a respite from a general bloody persecution of above three hundred years duration, when the Devil, envious of its happiness, and jealous of its future increase under that repose, attempted to stem its progress, not any more by open violence, and by instigating its avowed and professed enemies against it, as before; but by fomenting intestine divisions, by raising false friends, and undutiful rebellious children, to disturb its peace. The prophet foreboded and bemoaned the evil, many ages before, crying out, *the sons of my mother have risen up against me.* *

ARIUS was one of these concealed enemies, the instrument of the Devil's malice, and an unnatural son of the Church: he

* Cant. ch. 1. v. 5.

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counterfeited a zeal for truth, in order to pave the way for error and seduction; he impugned the divinity of the son of GOD, and his consubstantiality to his father, by impeaching the Catholic Doctrine of *sabellianism*; and under this disguise obtruded his own blasphemies for the genuine faith of the Church.

IN the ensuing century, NESTORIUS, copying the former Arch-heretic's hypocrisy and profound dissimulation, affected to be no less a zealot for truth and a champion for the Church than the former, that he might insinuate, less suspected, his pestiferous errors against the incarnation, in asserting a diversity of persons in JESUS CHRIST, and render them the more plausible; and the EUTYCHIANS, upon the foot of this heresy, and under a pretended zeal of oppugning it, fell into the other extreme, by confounding the divine and human nature.

THESE instances, to omit many others, are sufficient to make good my assertion, That it has been the avowed and uniform conduct of Heretics, of every stamp and of every

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every age, to counterfeit a zeal for truth, as a means to facilitate their insinuation of the most monstrous errors and absurdities; and therefore, as I further observed to our present purpose, our modern innovators, in setting up a pretended Reformation within these later days, have only copied after their forefathers, all the Heretics of former times, and walked in their footsteps.

THIS perfect resemblance subsisting between the Reformation and the anathematized Heresies of ancient times, must, at least, be owned to be a strong prejudice against it; yet not the only one, nor the most material.

THE fatal divisions, which are known to have prevailed within the precincts of the Reformation, since its first establishment, are another unanswerable objection to the credit of it, and a perpetual inherent disgrace. Variations in the exposition of Faith, as the bishop of Meaux judiciously observes, has been always looked upon as a mark of falshood; and yet it is notorious, that even the original sect of the Reformation, under the inspection and immediate direction of
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its founder, was continually wavering and varying in its symbols or confessions of faith; as may be seen at length in the history of the variations of the Protestant Churches, by the learned bishop just mentioned. But the fundamental disagreements in faith, which immediately broke out among them, in the numerous heterogeneal sects springing up, like so many hydras heads, out of LUTHER's revolt, and as different from one another in their belief and terms of communion, as they were from their Mother Church, from which they first deserted, confirm our objection to the credit of the Reformation, beyond a reply. LUTHER, 'tis well known, was the ringleader of the rebellion: many, fond of novelties, flocked to him, and listed, at first, under his standard; aiming at nothing more than barely making war against their Mother Church at any rate: but having now renounced their natural allegiance, and caught the itch of innovating from their leader, they began to think themselves as well qualified as him for the task, grew impatient of a subjection to a *premier*, and therefore soon revolted from him, to put up their own colours; and being thus divided into separate bodies, be-

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came the authors of disparate and contradictory systems of doctrine. A frightful idea of a godly Reformation! No, it can't be imagined, — it was not possible that a work, so inconsistent with itself, should be inspired and conducted by the Holy Ghost, and therefore it is certainly miscalled under that pompous title.

AGAIN, the bad characters of these pretended Reformers, their dissolute lives, and the motives which engaged them in their revolt, *viz.* pride, lust, and other inordinate passions, (as is well known to every one the least conversant in the histories of the late religious Revolutions) is another additional prejudice to the Protestant cause, and a corroborative proof that the spirit of God, which breaths nothing but sanctity and truth, never made use of, nor was aiding to such wicked instruments, for the propagation of his honour or the Reformation of his Church; nor to have had any hand in a work undertaken upon such corrupt principles. For, howsoever the authors of it may have given it out for the work of light, or the purity of the gospel, and obtruded it as such on their deluded Disciples,

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Disciples, it appeared the contrary, in all its circumstances, to every unprejudiced eye; the co-operation of the powers of darkness was visible thro' the whole, and the marks of untruth and ungodliness were evidently stamp'd upon it.

To make good this assertion, we need only draw a parallel between the authors of the Reformation and the apostles, the first planters of Christianity, as well as other ministers of GOD's word, indisputably allowed to be such, on other occasions; and to weigh the manifest disparity between the merits and works of the one and the other; for as it is said, *opposites appear in their truest light by being placed together*; first then, what the late pretended Reformers were, their own avowed characters will best declare; *viz.* worldly, carnal men, uncommissioned, without marks of being divinely inspired; destitute not only of the gift of miracles, but of sanctity of life, and common virtue, to gain credit to their arrogated prerogative of becoming apostles—apostate friars, or dissolute priests, wearied of celibacy and religious retirement, who set out by an open disobedience and rebellion against the Church and their supreme and lawful pastors;

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forwarded their daring undertaking, and gained proselites to their opinions, by flattering mens passions, and by an avowed espousal of liberty—who, in short, under the specious pretence of reforming errors and correcting abuses, broached novelties, introduced immorality, and supported it by principle.

AND, who were the abettors of these irregular proceedings? Ambitious princes, professed libertines, men of abandon'd consciences, (who found their account in an unrestrained enjoyment of their pleasures, by taking up with such indulgent condescending guides) and avaricious statesmen, who plunder'd and ransack'd the Churches, and filled their own coffers out of the spoils. The characters I have here set forth are neither feigned nor exaggerated; attested facts, and the histories of the late religious confusions, vouch to the truth of them.

IN the mean while the conclusion from these premises is the direct proof of what I just averr'd, That men of such corrupt manners and principles were unlikely persons to be chosen by Almighty God for the

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the extraordinary calling of the apostleship, and the reformation of his Church; and that, on the contrary, that boasted performance, coming from such hands, ought to be looked upon no otherwise than as an act of the greatest arrogance, and a barefaced cheat and imposture.

FOR whatsoever the advocates of the Reformation, no less idly than weakly, oppose to these invincible prejudices against the authors of it, as unfit and unequal to so great an undertaking—that almighty GOD has, on occasions, drawn good out of evil: this, being admitted in general, can be of no service to the particular case of the Reformation, but makes it only appear in a more declining state, and is meerly catching at a twig to save themselves from sinking.

Almighty GOD has, no doubt, on occasions, thwarted the evil designs of wicked men, and drawn this good from them, to make them turn out not only contrary to their presumptuous expectations, but even to their own confusion. 'Tis a truth no one questions. He has also,
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by his secret judgments, and the dispositions of his extraordinary providence, made use of one wicked man or kingdom to punish another; of which both Holy Writ and ecclesiastical and prophane history furnish us with innumerable instances. He has also observed the same conduct in correcting his disobedient children, for to reclaim them to their duty. Thus he used to chastise his own chosen people the Jews, by means of the Assyrians, and their neighbouring enemies, (tho' idolatrous wicked people themselves) who were the occasional scourges of the divine justice to punish their infidelity, and to bring them back to repentance. In the like manner, since the establishment of the law of grace, he, from time to time, chastises his Church by the means of external persecutions and intestine divisions, to the end the faithful may be proved, the unfaithful be known, and her rotten members cut off from her, and removed. Our blessed Lord himself foretold that scandals would be, and mentions it as an occasional, or a kind of necessary evil, in order to separate the *cockle* from the *wheat*; that is, the wicked from the good. And, infine, by the same extraordinary dispositions

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ons of his divine providence, we see, oftentimes, the wicked oppress the just for the exercise of their patience, that their justice may prove more conspicuous, their merit be increased, and Almighty God glorified in their virtue; which, no doubt, are great blessings resulting from some evil. But then, in all these instances where evil has prevailed, it is evident that Almighty God's providence has been barely passive, or permissive, for the several ends already alledged, and for other hidden designs of his unsearchable wisdom,

BUT I appeal to all histories, inspired, ecclesiastical and prophane, whether it was ever known, from the beginning of the world to the time of the Reformation, that Almighty God made use of wicked men as his chosen and immediate instruments for the propagating the honour and glory of his name, for the establishing his Church, or for the promulgation of truth and the abolishment of error; and I appeal to the sense of all mankind whether such a conduct seems suitable to our notion of an omnipotent, omniscient and benign providence. The psalmist says that

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Almighty God is pleased sometimes to receive his praises from the mouths of infants and suckling babes. Ps. 8 v. 3. The apostle also observes that he has, on occasions, chosen the foolish of the world to confound the wise, and the weak for to defeat the strong. 1 COR. ch. 1. v. 27. But it is no where met with in holy writ, that Almighty God made choice of the impious as proper instruments to bring about such extraordinary events, or to co-operate with him in his works of grace. And therefore, if no instance can be produced till this renowned epoch of time, of Almighty God's acting in this manner; and, if it is inconsistent with our idea of his infinite wisdom and goodness, why shall we presume to think that he then, and only then, began to alter his conduct, and the usual course of his divine providence, in choosing, for the Reformation of Religion and abolishing error, men of abandoned consciences — without virtue, without principles, without sanctity of life and manners, to gain credit to their enterprise? no, it is not credible, we must renounce our faith, our reason and common sense, to give into such an extravagant paradox: And this reflection alone might be sufficient

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sufficient, to every man of serious thought and unprejudiced judgment, to sink the reputation of a Religion so inauspiciously founded, carried on upon the most corrupt motives, and concluded (as I hope to prove in the sequel of this Essay) in the subversion of the true faith, of pure christian virtue, and evangelical morality.

BUT now, to come to the other part of the parallel, as the deformity of vice is displayed in its truest shades when confronted with its contrary virtue, and falsehood seen best through its opposite truth, so the following instances of apostolic men, whose virtue and election was never questioned, opposed to our late Reformers, being in character the very reverse to them, will discover their unfitness to the great undertaking they presumptuously pretend to, beyond all contradiction. I say therefore, that if we look back into all foregoing ages, we shall find that it has been the constant unvariable conduct of Almighty God to make use of chosen souls, for the undertaking and carrying on enterprizes of the greatest moment ; those particularly which had immediate relation to the propagation

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of his divine honour : *to wit*, he made choice of men actually qualified for the great purposes to which they were called ; men of consummate virtue, of integrity of life ; men of sanctity, and, in every respect irreproachable ; or made them such by a profusion of his extraordinary graces conferred upon them, and even by privileging them with miraculous powers.

SUCH was MOSES, the leader of the Israelites, GOD's once chosen people, a man endued with all kind of qualifications, natural and supernatural ; a profound wisdom, an unparalleled virtue, and gifted with the powers of working extraordinary signs and miracles. They were these extraordinary prerogatives, which acquired him credit amongst his people, gave a sanction to his mission, and betokened it to come immediately from GOD himself. All the rest of the patriarchs and prophets of the old law, delegated by Almighty GOD on errands of the like nature, and the spiritual guides of that people, were also distinguished by similar gifts of nature and grace. The great JOHN the Baptist proved also his mission by his exemplar life and uncommon virtues

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virtues ; and the Apostles called by JESUS CHRIST to the ministry of his word, to divulge the glory of his name and to echo the truths of his gospel to the remotest parts of the world, (tho' originally simple illete-rate fishermen) were first brought up in the school of CHRIST, imbued by this divine master in the rudiments of virtue and the science of eternal life ; gradually weaned from the world and its corruptions, and lastly illuminated in a miraculous manner, and confirmed in grace by the descent of the HOLY GHOST upon them, to qualify them for their sublime ministry ; and even SAUL, of a persecutor of CHRIST and his Church, miraculously brought into his fold and become a Disciple, was yet to be prepared by prayer, fasting and the infusion of supernatural gifts into his soul, to fit him for the office of an apostle of the Gentiles, and to become a vessel of election.

I'LL close this list of apostles with one of a modern date, a cotemporary to the pretended Reformers, the great St. FRANCIS XAVIER, the apostle of the Indies, whose avowed and celebrated virtues, unwearied labours, blessed by Heaven with a stupendous

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pendous success in the conversion of above a million of Infidels to the faith of CHRIST, and sealed with the power of working miracles, in their nature surprizing, and in their number so many as to seem to have been a habit infused; these supernatural qualifications and endowments of grace did, I say, denote him to have been another vessel of election, for the propagation of GOD's honour, for the divulging of the Gospel, and the dilating of his Church.

BUT how unlike to this great man and the other eminent and chosen ministers of GOD's word, our late pretended gospellers and Reformers were, this plain parallel between one and the other manifestly shews:—and how infinitely they fall short of the just idea we conceive of persons chosen by GOD, and delegated by him to promulgate the purity of the Gospel and to reform his Church, or, in other terms, to be the abolishers of error, and the restorers of truth, is equally evident from their avowed characters. For, in a word, all we know of them is, that they were wicked, profligate and sacrilegious men; commencing apostles by the breach of the most solemn vows they had made to their
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divine maker : we know, that they rose in open rebellion against their Mother Church, and that the springs of their revolt were human passions, the spirit of pride, revenge, disobedience, and the most criminal motives. But we are no where assured that, upon their taking upon themselves, in this presumptuous, inauspicious manner, uncommissioned, uncalled, unqualified to become Reformers, that they became more reformed themselves, more sanctified and regular in conduct, more chaste, mortified, humble, or observant of the evangelical counsels ; and therefore we have the less reason to think them capacitated for operating such a reform on others, or that they were chosen and gifted by Almighty God for the execution of so great a design. And this, I presume to repeat again, has, and will always be, an invincible prejudice against the Protestant cause with every rational man, unbiassed and unprejudiced, in spite of their idle plea, that Almighty God can and has drawn good out of evil : for tho' this is true, in the limited sense in which we have instanced it above, yet in the most important concern of constituting

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stituting or reforming a Church, it is wholly unprecedented.

OUR adversaries are so well satisfied of the force and justice of this reasoning, from the nature of the thing, that they occasionally adopt it in their own defence, against such as, from time to time, revolt from them, and quit their tenets to set up a new system of doctrine. Thus, the Anabaptists no sooner separated from their head Patriarch LUTHER, and modelled a Church of their own fashion and humour, but he called upon them to prove their commission by undoubted marks of its coming from heaven, and of its being stamped with the divine seal; and in default of their producing these credentials, he conjured them to adhere to the scheme of faith they had received from him. And, without appealing to any remote instances of the like nature, does not the Church of England, at this time of day, use the same language with the new set of innovators called Methodists, and with as many others as renounce her authority, and dissent from her in points of doctrine or discipline? How inconsistent indeed they are with themselves, and LUTHER before them, by this conduct, is obvious

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obvious to every one's reflection; for, by the same right that LUTHER himself separated from his Mother Church, without being able to produce his credentials or powers to give a sanction to his revolt, by that right did his followers separate from him, and others again from them, and so may continue to do to the end of the chapter; according to that celebrated saying of TERTULLIAN above fifteen hundred years ago, grounded on his observation of the differences among the innovators of those early days: *What is allowed to VALENTIN, is likewise so to the Valentinians; the Marcionists have equal power with MARCION;** which only evinces this certain and uncontestable truth, that a cause originally and fundamentally bad, can never be brought to a state of perfection and stability by any alterations whatsoever; but, like an edifice raised on a sandy foundation, or a tree bad at the root, will either suddenly fall to the ground, or insensibly decay.

HOWEVER, waving this strong prejudice against the Reformation, (which can never be got over, from the undue commission of the authors of it, and their want of quali-

* TERTUL. de Præscrip. ch. 42.

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fications to render them equal to so great an undertaking) we will, pursuant to my first design, give it all the weight the circumstances of it will bear, or that our adversaries can in justice expect, by examining it by the Gospel rule—the tree by its fruits; that is, we'll consider how far its real merits answer the pompous title. To this effect it will be necessary, as I have already premised, to fix a simple, precise idea of a Religious Reformation, strictly such, and to examine how near the late much-boasted performance comes up to it; for it is not, as I said before, what a thing is called, or what it is supposed to be, but what it effectually is, which should influence our judgments; and real, not imaginary merits are to determine our differences.

Now I apprehend that a Religious Reformation may be defined, or not improperly conceived, under this disjunctive idea, viz, *an abolishment of error and superstition, or an alteration of discipline*, in order to the amendment or perfection of mens lives and manners. That the Church is susceptible of a reform, in the second larger

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larger acceptation of the word, was never doubted ; and has been often practised by a change of discipline in regard to the whole body, or a part of the Church, according to the several exigencies of times and circumstances. This with regard to the whole body has been done from time to time by decrees of general councils, or by ordinances from the supreme pastors, directed to the diffusive body of the Church, and sealed by their acceptance and filial submission to them : and with regard to particular parts of the Church, the separate regulations of distinct districts and dioceses, the institutions of several religious orders, promoting the service of Almighty God under their respective rules, are, strictly speaking, so many particular Re-formations of manners and private discipline ; and therefore a Reformation in this respect has never been disallowed, or the legality of it disputed.

THE main question then between Protestants and us, is, Whether the Church was ever liable to a reform in point of doctrine ; or in other terms, Whether it has, or could fall into error and superstition ?

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on ? Our adversaries assert it, as needs they must, to justify their claim to their pretended merit of becoming Reformers, and to give a plausible pretence to their separation from their Mother Church. Catholics, on the other hand, not only have as positively and constantly denied it, but presume to shew that their pretended Reformation has been even defective in the second and larger acceptation of the word — *a Reformation of manners and discipline*, and that it turns out, in the whole, like a sumptuous edifice which is faulty in the foundation, and irregular in the superstructure, and has nothing but a pompous outward shew of a front to recommend it.

BUT still, it must be owned, we are never the nearer the end of our controversy for what one says or the other denies ; avowed facts and merits can only decide it ; what these are, or ought to be, the definition of a Reformation, just stated, plainly insinuates ; and whether the Reformation can lay a claim to them is what we are next to enquire into ; *to wit*, Whether it has effectually contributed to a general amendment

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amendment of manners?—Whether it has eradicated loose and libertine principles, and has introduced a stricter discipline and regularity in their stead?—Whether it has established a more implicit unlimited obedience to Almighty GOD in his representatives, the Church and its ministers?—Whether, thro' its means, the evangelical counsels have been more enforced, and the practice of morality has been seen to gain ground?—Whether, the way of the Cross, selfdenials and mortifications have been inculcated, and the ancient fasts of the Church kept up to their primitive rigour?—But chiefly and fundamentally, Whether it has caused the abolishment of error and superstition, and brought back the faith of CHRIST, supposed to have been corrupted, to its primitive purity?

THESE were the fruits which were to be expected from this pretended evangelical work: but if the Reformation has failed of answering these respective expectations, and is proved to be an idle presumptuous attempt, and it can be, on the other hand, evinced that the Catholic Church is clear of all their impeachments of error, and

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comes up to our perfect idea of the Church of CHRIST, not only in the integrity of her faith, as necessary to salvation, but in the exactness of her discipline, as a means to evangelical perfection ; it then follows, of course, that this much-boasted Reformation, or Protestants separation from us, was without reason, without foundation, and unjustifiable—a *titulus sine re*, that is, a meer pompous empty name.

To make good therefore this inference is my present task ; the vanity and unjustifiableness of the Reformation, in all its circumstances, and the insufficiency of it to the respective purposes for which it ought to have been intended and framed, is what I undertake to prove ; and to the end my proofs may be less liable to exception, I flatter myself to be able to deduce them from their own principles and *supposed* rule of faith, Scripture, in its obvious and natural sense. I said, their *supposed rule of faith*, because, tho' they pretend to make Scripture their rule of faith, yet it is certain that it is not Scripture in its genuine sense, but Scripture tortured and strained to an alien meaning by the interpretation

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pretation of private judgment, which is effectually their rule of faith. But since they make a boast of appealing to the plain word of God, and we agree to put the issue of the debate to this test, in order to prevent all ambiguity and future mistakes on this head, and to obstruct any cavils that might arise from it, I beg leave to observe, *first*, that by *Scripture*, in its obvious and genuine sense, I mean the natural import of the text, resulting from a *serious* reading, to every man of sound understanding and unprejudiced judgment, supposing words to have their natural meaning, as a *spade*, to *signify a spade*; a *house*, a *house*, &c. — But still, by *plain Scripture* I don't mean the dead letter, but Scripture as explained by and reconciled to itself in obscure passages by others clear and perspicuous: — I mean, *in fine*, *Scripture* as it has been understood and explained by the sacred interpreters of the primitive and pure ages of the Church. — In this sense, I say, I undertake to prove the tenets of the Catholic Church to be perfectly consonant to the word of God, and the Reformation to be wholly dissonant from it. I observe, *secondly*, that by putting the issue of our debate to *clear Scripture* we

c 3

would

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would not be understood to admit the dead letter of Scripture, much less Scripture of *private* interpretation, to be *in fact* the decisive rule of faith and arbiter of religious controversies : — *thirdly*, I do not mean hereby to renounce apostolical tradition as a part of the word of GOD and actual rule of faith, nor to exclude the Church from her prerogative insured to her, by CHRIST's solemn promises, of being the sole interpreter of the divine oracles, and arbiter of all religious controversies and differences ; on the contrary, as this point is the fundamental corner stone of the Church, and the greatest stone of offence and stumbling block to our adversaries, and the main object of their spleen in their rash attempt upon a Reformation, it justly challenges our first attention ; and therefore is what I propose to begin in the defence of in the following dissertations. But still, I say, without giving up the Church's undoubted right and prerogative of being the legal and natural judge of all our religious debates, we have such a confidence in the goodness of our cause, that, in condescension to our adversaries, we are not afraid of
of

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of bringing it to their own bar, the plain text of Scripture in its obvious sense. Such is the force of truth, that it cannot fail of appearing to advantage at every tribunal : *magna est veritas & prævalet*. All I have to fear, is, lest the cause of truth may suffer under my management of it, which that GOD may avert is my repeated prayer ; that the enemies of truth may be converted, or confuted, is the extent of my malice ; and that its friends may be confirmed in their profession of it, is the term of my wishes, and the whole scope of my feeble endeavours.



INTRODUCTION

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. in relation to the proposed publication of a new edition of the "Lives of the Presidents of the United States." I am very glad to hear that you are undertaking this work, and I am sure it will be a valuable addition to our literature. I have no objection to your using the material now in my possession, and I am sure that your edition will be the best and most complete yet published. I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. M. Smith

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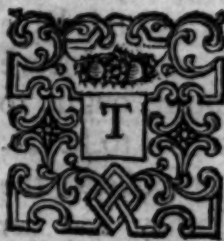


A N

Important Enquiry, &c.

CHAP. I.

The true Church of Christ can never err in matters of Faith ; and, therefore, an attempt on a Reformation was vain and groundless.



THE Being or not being of an unerring guide in matters of faith has been always justly looked upon as a point of the last importance towards fixing the Church's authority and stability ; the point by which the means of salvation are ascertained to her members——by which the merits of the Reformation may be directly determined, and the secondary lesser controversies decided under one : for, if there is a living unerring guide in points of faith, and the Church can make good her claim to that

prerogative, she from thence becomes the sanctuary and repository of Truth, and her authority ought to be revered and obeyed : by the tenure of the same privilege her members are safe under her influence and direction ; the door is thereby absolutely shut to a Reformation, and the Church is out of the reach of every impeachment whatsoever.

THE Ringleaders of the Reformation were sensible of the justice and force of these Inferences : they knew that as long as the Church was sheltered under the cover of infallibility, she was impregnable in every other part, and therefore their first attempt was to dislodge her out of these entrenchments ; but, how vainly, and unsuccessfully, we are now to consider.

As our adversaries affect to take Scripture alone, that is, the written word of God, for the standard and test by which they would have all controversies to be tried, I must observe that nothing less than clear Scripture ought to be admitted in the present debate, or to be allowed of sufficient weight to dispossess the Church of her tenure of infallibility and her prescriptive right of being the sovereign judge and arbiter in matters of faith ; which, by her own account, she claims from the foundation and establishment of christianity ; and, even by the confession of her adversaries, had been in quiet uninterrupted possession of for the space of several hundred years ; cavils, therefore, quibbles,

quibbles, false glosses and misrepresentations, have nothing to do in this controversy : Scripture is the umpire mutually agreed to ; but Scripture, I say, in its plain and obvious sense, and as understood in the earliest times by the sacred interpreters, revered for their virtue and learning ; and not as misrepresented by the forced constructions of wit, disingenuity and the spirit of innovating, which is ever more fruitful of invention than equitable to truth.

Now, Catholics think they can produce clear Scripture in support of their side of the debate, *the Church's claim to infallibility*—we dare defy our adversaries to produce clear Scripture in opposition to it ; and as to their replies to the clear texts quoted by us, we doubt not, by the grace of God, to make it appear, That they are no more than strained explanations and meer cavils, which, as I just observed, must be deemed insufficient to over-rule our plain evidences.

I'll confine myself, in this controversy, to the texts of the New Testament, which, as they immediately affect the subject in question, are more fit to determine the issue of it, and will fully answer this desirable purpose with every man divested of passion and prejudice, who has no other view than that truth should prevail.

The Church's infallibility

SECTION. I.

The Church's infallibility proved from clear Scripture.

AMONG the many texts of the New Testament which the Catholics have to produce in defence of the Church's indefeasible right to infallibility, our blessed Lord's promise to St. PETER I take to be not the least clear, apposite and significant—*Thou art PETER, that is a rock, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.** The natural import of this text is obvious, implying, as plain as words can express, three important truths;—1. The stability of the Church, intimated by its solid foundation, being *built on a rock*;—2. A prediction of the violent efforts which would be incessantly made by the powers of darkness to undermine the Church and subvert its constitution;—and, lastly, CHRIST's solemn promise of his effectual aid to enable her to defeat all these vain attempts of her infernal enemies,—*the gates of Hell shall not prevail, &c.* The prediction we have seen verified in the innumerable storms raised against the Church from outward persecutions of infidels and unbelievers, and from intestine divisions of its own rebellious children; and we have no more reason to mistrust CHRIST's power or fidelity, in ful-

* Matt. 16. v. 18.

filling his promises, than to question his foreknowledge of these future events ; it would even be blasphemy to do it. Moreover, the noble victorious stand the Church had effectually made from time to time, before the epoch of the Reformation, (acknowledged even by our adversaries) sufficiently instances CHRIST's extraordinary providence over his Church ; and, to every unprejudiced person, that is, to every one who has not made it his interest to contest the Church's prerogatives, evinces the accomplishment of CHRIST's promises to her.

BUT our blessed Lord's special providence over his Church is more distinctly declared in the sequel of his promises, by which he confirms, strengthens and enhances, those he had just given before. His paternal concern for her preservation did not rest in providing indefinitely for her defence and safety, but he, moreover, graciously vouchsafed to signify and point out the particular means by which this victorious, supernatural aid would be subministered to her. These happy tidings stand upon record in the 11 Ch. of St. JOHN, where our blessed Saviour is mentioned to address his disciples in words full of comfort to them, and a certain pledge to his future Church of its becoming the object of his ever-watchful care: *I will pray the father, and he will give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever,*

ever, even the spirit of truth* : and he had told them before, that *when he shall come (the spirit of truth) he shall guide you into all truth* ||. Here our blessed Lord first acquaints his disciples with the nature of the blessing his eternal father had in store for them and his Church, to wit, *another comforter*, who, when he was separated from them, would supply his personal absence, and be always with them, as their support under all their future trials, pressures and difficulties ; a blessing which would be the *spirit of truth* : so that what is as incompatible with *truth* as light with darkness, to wit, *error* and *seduction*, should be absolutely excluded from it, and find no admittance or access ; that tho' the *gates of Hell* would be open to send forth all its infernal forces to destroy it, they *should not prevail* : and lastly, he insures to them the continuance or perpetuity of this blessing, that *he may abide with you for ever* ; that is, with them, with their successors, and with the whole Church *for ever—to the end of the world*.

IN a word, these texts are so intelligible, and directly apposite to the point I have undertaken to maintain, that to offer to explain them, or to place them in a clearer light than they appear in their own naked view, divested of all gloss and interpretations, would be as ridiculous as to attempt to prove first prin-

* St. JOHN, c. 16. v. 17. || St. JOHN, c. 16. v. 13.

ciples; and that man must be very fruitful of subtleties and distinctions who can strain the texts to any other sense or meaning than what the words naturally import; to wit, that which is the Catholic sense of them, and is the direct assertion of the Church's pretensions. I am confident that had our blessed Lord delivered the contradictory of the texts I have now laid before you, our adversaries would have looked on them as positive proofs of their favourite opinion of the Church's *fallibility*; and therefore why the present tenor of the texts should not carry the same weight, and be deemed equally conclusive for its *infallibility*, and influence our understandings into an undoubted assent to it, requires more sagacity to discover than I am master of: 'tis certain that they had this effect on the great apostle of the Gentiles, who looked upon these declarations from the oracle of truth, in the behalf of his Church, as such an ample and unquestionable establishment of her prerogative, that he was not content barely to profess his belief of it, but endeavoured to conform to his divine master in his conception of the thing, and his manner of expressing it; for, as CHRIST signifies the indefectibility of the Church by the firmness of its foundation, comparing it to a house built on a rock, so this vessel of election, the faithful interpreter of CHRIST's doctrine, styles it *the pillar and ground of truth**;

* 1 TIM. c. 3. v. 15.

a metaphor which, in its own nature, imprints on our minds a similar idea of stability and immutability : and unless our blessed Lord had settled his Church on this indefeatable footing, it is not to be conceived how he himself should direct such an unlimited obedience to be paid to her authority as to anathematise, for heathens, publicans, and aliens, all such as should behave refractory to it : yet this he has done very expressly — *if he will not hear the Church,* says he, *let him be to thee as a heathen and publican* *. And still, addressing his Church in more emphatical terms, he, as it were, levels her authority with his own, and interprets every slight put upon her as a personal injury offered to his own divine prerogative, and to his eternal father himself ; *he,* says he, *that hears you hears me ; he that despises you despises me ; and he that despises me despises him that sent me* ||. Now, I say, it is not credible that our blessed Lord would have transferred his divine authority on a fallible Church, (such as the Church is supposed to be in our adversaries system) and which, being in that defective capacity, might be liable to act in a manner derogatory to the honour, and unworthy of the influence of his increated wisdom, sanctity and truth.

SUCH, nevertheless, are the unavoidable and even avowed consequences of our adversaries

* MATT. C. 18. V. 17. || LUKE, C. 10. V. 16.

doctrine; and, what is worse, they are contradictory to the sacred testimonies of the word of God, to which they pretend to appeal. For, in a word, the state of the present controversy, in the clearest and most simple view, is this: here are two opposite opinions concerning the Church's authority, and her spiritual capacity; the one is the Catholics, asserting the Church, as a spiritual guide, to be infallible in her faith and in her decisions; the other of Protestants absolutely denying her this prerogative: and these opinions are to be tried by Scripture. Scripture we produce directly relating to the point in dispute: now the question is, Which of the two opinions is supported by these sacred testimonies? the plain words and natural import of them, as we have seen, are clearly on the Catholics side; and, consequently, nothing but evasions and strained constructions can be the Protestant plea; the principal whereof is, that the alledged promises are conditional, *viz*, depending on the Church's fidelity; or, that they are limited to the persons of the apostles. But how arbitrary and precarious these assertions are, I leave to every one to judge from the direct tenor of the texts, which are as absolute as words can make them, without the least intimation of any condition tack'd to them. And the cause or motives of CHRIST's giving these solemn promises to his Church, *viz*, the exigency of his

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his

his extraordinary assistance and presence to preserve it from error, subsists to the latest times ; or, rather, is the more prevalent ; as the Church is farther removed from the apostles happy days, in which CHRIST's instructions were recent and fresh in every one's memory. What our blessed Lord told his apostles just before his ascension, when he commissioned them to enter on their apostolical charge, is an absolute confirmation of this presumption—*Going therefore, says he, teach ye all nations—and behold I am with you always, even unto the end of the world* *.

IN this text I must observe again three things to be implied, or rather plainly expressed ;—the first is CHRIST's commission to his apostles, to baptise and teach all nations ;—the second is his promise of being aiding to them in the execution of this commission, and the faithful discharge of their ministry ;—and the last is a continuance of this aid to the end of the world. The commission itself cannot be supposed, even by our adversaries, to have been personal ; that is, to be limited to the apostles, and terminating in them : because, as long as there should be any remains of superstition and infidelity in the world—as long as mankind should be subject to error, so long would there be occasion for evangelical la-

* MATT. C. 28. V. 19. 20.

bourers, in order to disabuse them of their errors, and to bring them to the knowledge and belief of CHRIST ; and so long also would these sacred ministers stand in need of special help and assistance from above, to enable them to accomplish this great work. The exigency, as I just observed, but too visibly subsists, and is like to subsist to the end of the world ; and therefore there can be no doubt of God's gracious mercy in providing for it : and, in short, our blessed Lord, to remove all cause of distrust of the perpetuity of this inestimable blessing, has, in the aforesaid text, expressly promised it at all times, and to prolong it to the end of time. *And behold*, says he, *I am with you always, even unto the end of the world* || ; not with the apostles only, most certainly ; because, being mortal men, their lives were circumscribed by the course of nature within a short period of time ; therefore it was to be with them, and with the Church, in a continual succession of pastors to the world's end.

AGAIN, the circumstances of time, and the remarkable occasions in which our blessed Saviour made these solemn promises to his Church, are not the least deserving our notice, nor a small confirmation of their design, efficacy and extent.

|| MATT. C. 28. V. 20.

THE first promise, intimating that *the gates of hell should not prevail against his Church* *, was directed to St. PETER upon that solemn occasion when, in reward of his unparalleled faith and glorious profession of the divinity of CHRIST, he constituted him his vicar, and head of his Church ; in token whereof he changes his former name of SIMON into that of PETER, which is interpreted *a rock*, and declares his intentions of building his future Church upon him——*and upon this rock I will build my Church* ||. He gives him a name adapted to the nature and efficacy of the thing which he proposed to signify, *viz*, the unshaken stability of the Church ; which, like an edifice raised upon a rock, would be proof against any storms whatsoever ; so that, tho' Hell would assail her with all its infernal forces, and put every stratagem in execution to undermine her foundations, they should fail in their vain attempt ——*the gates of hell shall not prevail, &c.*

THE other promises were delivered either on the eve of his sacred passion, or just before his glorious ascension, when, at both one and the other of these occasions, he was going to leave them in the utmost state of dereliction, on their impending loss of him, and consequently in the greatest concern for the welfare of his infant Church, which was scarce

* MATT. C. 16. v. 18. || *ibid.*

settled ;

settled; then, humanly speaking, it was looking towards its final dissolution. Our blessed Lord therefore paternally obviates these distrustful, desponding thoughts; dissipates their apprehensions, and rouzes their hopes, by giving them the solemn assurance of another comforter, and a more lasting support—*the spirit of truth, to guide his Church into all truth *—and to abide with it to the end of the world †.* These promises, I say, were not more comfortable than seasonable.

Now how many concurrent evidences and corroborative proofs are here of the Catholic pretensions! the clear words of the sacred texts, which nothing but affected disingenuity and strained constructions can distort from their natural meaning, are an uncontestable evidence, and such a one as our adversaries, by the rule of faith they pretend to appeal to, clear Scripture in its obvious and natural sense, are bound to admit of. The end of these divine promises, *to wit*, our dependance on the perpetuity and preservation of his Church to the latest times, plainly expressed in the tenor of the texts, is another invincible proof—the time or occasions on which these solemn promises were delivered are an undeniable confirmation of the intent of them; and even the obstinate resistance our adversaries make to these

* ST. JOHN, c. 16. v. 13. † MATT. c. 28. v. 19. 20.

undeniable evidences to the Church's prerogative, becomes itself an additional proof of it; because it evinces that there can be nothing so evident which wit and disingenuity may not find ways of eluding, or the wilfulness and perverseness of man's mind will not be ready to contest; and therefore Scripture cannot be so clear in itself, on the Catholic side of the question, but heretical depravity can torture it to a contrary meaning, which concludes a seeming necessity of the existence of a supreme tribunal, from which there should be suffered no appeal. But, in the mean while, as such a tribunal is by our adversaries rejected, we have only a middle way of adjusting our differences, usual among contending parties when they cannot come to an agreement, and decline carrying up their dispute to a higher court, *viz*, of putting it to a reference; none more proper in our present case than the primitive fathers of the Church, who must be admitted to be the most faithful and unexceptionable interpreters of the sacred Writings. But, because these venerable authorities may be consulted at length in a full collection of them in almost every treatise that has appeared on this subject, for brevity's sake I'll content myself with producing two or three short extracts from them, as far as may answer my purpose, barely to shew what was their sense and opinion of CHRIST's aforesaid promises to his Church, and to prove the Catholic

lic interpretation of them to be conformable to theirs.

St. CYRIL of Alexandria declares the Church of CHRIST to be so settled and established on St. PETER, through his faith, (which was the cause of his being thus privileged by CHRIST) as *never to fall, but to bear up against the gates of hell, and so to remain for ever* *. A Catholic could not express the doctrine of infallibility in plainer terms. St. CYPRIAN, more at length, delivers himself on the same subject as follows,

“ CHRIST, in the Gospel, when his disciples
“ went away from him as he was speaking,
“ turning to the twelve said, What! will you
“ also depart?—PETER answered him, Lord,
“ to whom shall we go! Thou hast the words
“ of eternal life; and we believe and have
“ known that thou art the son of the living
“ God. PETER speaks here, upon whom the
“ Church was built, declaring, in the name
“ of the Church, That tho’ great numbers of
“ such stubborn and selfwilled people as will
“ not submit, become deserters, *yet the Church*
“ *will never fall from CHRIST* †; which Church
“ is, The people united to the priest, and the
“ flock following their pastor.

AND again he says that—“ The Church,
“ being the spouse of CHRIST, *cannot be an*
“ *adulteress*; she is *uncorrupt and pure*—she it
“ is that preserves us for Heaven, and gives

* St. CYRIL, Alex. Dial. de Trin. l. 4. † CYPR. Epist. 69. ad Flor. Papinianum.

“ to her children, whom she has brought forth,
 “ the inheritance of a crown.

St. AUSTIN also, on these words of the 57th psalm—*they have gone astray from the womb and spoken lies*—expresses himself to the following effect——“ Were they therefore gone astray
 “ from the womb because they have spoken
 “ lies? or, rather, have they not spoken lies,
 “ because they were gone astray from the
 “ womb? *For 'tis in the Church's womb that*
 “ *truth remains*: whosoever is separated from
 “ this womb of the Church *must of necessity*
 “ *speak lies, &c.* *

AGAIN——“ Here is shewn God and his
 “ temple; which is—the holy Church—the
 “ one Church—the true Church—the Catho-
 “ lic Church—which fights against all here-
 “ sies. Fight she may, *but she can't be foiled.*
 “ All heresies have gone out from her like
 “ useless branches lopt off from the vine: but
 “ *she remains in her root—the gates of Hell*
 “ *shall not prevail against her.*

AND upon these words of the 101st psalm,
 ——*In the assembling the people together in one,*
and kings to serve our Lord, he answered him in
the way of his strength——the same saint intro-
 duces heretics objecting to the Church's stabi-
 lity, and refutes their objection as follows——
 “ But that Church which was spread through
 “ all nations now has no longer a being—it

* AUG. Exer. in Ps. 57. numb. 6. Tom. 4. p. 545.

“ is quite lost ! This is the cry of those who
 “ are not in the Church. *O impudent clamour !*
 “ she is not, because you don’t belong to her
 “ —see that you have not, for that reason,
 “ lost your being ; for she will have a being
 “ tho’ you have none. *This abominable and*
 “ *accursed calumny, full of presumption and deceit,*
 “ *void of all truth, wisdom and reason ; idle, te-*
 “ *merarious, rash and pernicious, the spirit of*
 “ God foresaw, when, even, as it were, a-
 “ gainst them, he proclaimed her unity, in as-
 “ sembling the people in one, and kings to serve
 “ our lord—Because there were to arise some
 “ that would say against her—’tis true she was,
 “ but now she is perished : *Shew me, says she,*
 “ *the fewness of my days* I do not enquire for
 “ my days in the next world, those are with-
 “ out end. ’Tis not those days of eternity I
 “ ask for, I desire to know my *continuance in*
 “ *this world.* These days I desire you to shew
 “ me. And he has shewed me, neither was
 “ the answer insignificant. And who was it
 “ but he that is the very way ? And what
 “ was the information he gave me ?—*Behold*
 “ *I am with you to the end of the world **.

Now from this, and all the foregoing cita-
 tions, ’tis plain that the fathers unanimously
 concurred in the belief of an unerring, infal-
 lible Church ; for what else means these ex-
 pressive declarations, that *it is in the Church’s*

* AUG. ENARR. 2. in PF 101.

womb truth remains——that being the spouse of CHRIST she can't become an adulteress——that she is pure and uncorrupt, and will always remain in her root, even to the end of the world?

It is also certain, that they maintained the Church's prerogative with no less warmth and zeal against the oppugners of it, the heretics of their own days, looking on their opposition with the greatest horror and indignation; St. AUGUSTIN in particular, as we have seen, styles it *an impudent clamour——an abominable and accursed calumny*: and by the same token, all other opponents, in whatsoever age they appear, come under the same censure.

It is also observable, that the fathers ground their stedfast belief of the Church's infallibility on the promises of CHRIST to his Church before cited, *viz. that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her——behold I am with you to the end of the world, &c. &c.*

THE consequence, immediately flowing from these observations, is the direct confirmation of what I had to prove, *viz.* That the Catholic interpretation of the aforesaid promises, by the judgment of these unexceptionable referees, is true and genuine, and in the same sense, and to the same effect as they themselves understood and explained them; that is, towards the establishment of the Church's undoubted prerogative:—that therefore the contrary interpretation of the Reformers must be reputed spurious, arbitrary and unnatural, anathematized long ago by these
great

great lights of the Church, or, as I said, comprised within their condemnation of the Heretics of their own times.

AND therefore, tho' I might here very well drop my pen, and close this important debate with the testimonies of these irrefragable vouchers; yet I cannot forbear drawing some other obvious consequences from the foregoing premises, which further evince the justice of the Catholic cause, and the badness of our adversaries; or at least, if they cannot give an additional weight to the precedent proofs, they may make us more sensible of the weight they carry already, and will place their merit in a light more conspicuous.

SECTION II.

Inferences from the premises confirming the Catholic doctrine of the Church's infallibility, with other collateral and rational proofs fully refuting the opposition of her adversaries.

WHEN our late Gospellers undertook the work of Reforming, they pretended, as we have seen, to raise their edifice upon the foundation of Scripture; that is, on the pure word of God alone.—The purity of the Gospel was the general cry.—All religious tenets were to be brought to this test—and therefore if their pompous performance has not come up to this standard, it must be judged to have

have failed in the foundation, and the whole structure to be consequently faulty and ruinous. Yet this, I presume to think, and flatter myself I have proved to be their case in the present controversy, which is acknowledged to be the principal and fundamental controversy between them and us. We have produced clear Scripture on the Catholic side of the question—we have made it appear that our adversaries have no clear Scripture to bring against it; and therefore if, at first setting out, they recede from their own established rule, by quitting the clear and natural sense of the text for their own arbitrary interpretations, nothing but convincing irresistible reasons can justify this discession.

WHEN the Catholic Church, with regard to any part of the sacred Writings, seems to quit the literal sense of the text, the motives inducing her to it are apparent, solid, and unexceptionable; such as are the reconciling Scripture with itself, where there is a seeming clashing or contradiction in the texts—thus, for instance, where our blessed Saviour is mentioned to say, *my father is greater than me* †, (which, literally understood, insinuates an inequality of the divine persons, and establishes the Arian Dogma) the Church, confronting this text with many others, positively asserting the son's consubstantiality with the father, justly concludes

† JOHN C. 4. v. 28.

this speech to have relation only to the human nature of CHRIST; and therefore to argue from parity of reason, it lies on our adversaries, in the present controversy, to produce clear Scripture in opposition to, and directly refuting the literal meaning of CHRIST's promises of Infallibility to his Church; or to shew manifest contradictions and fatal inconveniences to flow from this prerogative—as for example, that it is inconsistent with his infinite wisdom and bountiful providence—that it is prejudicial to the good and perpetuity of his Church—or, infine, that it is injurious to mankind in general, and an obstruction to his attaining the great end of his existence. But if no clear Scripture is, or can be brought against the point in dispute, to ballance our quotations for the affirmative, (as has been already proved there cannot) and if the aforesaid consequences can in no respect be said to follow from the Catholic doctrine, and are, on the contrary, a necessary sequel of the Protestant tenets, then this controversy may be judged to be here at an end, and the cause decided.

YET this, to argue the case *ad hominem*, that is, canvassing the matter with our adversaries from their own way of reasoning, I apprehend to be the real truth of the matter, and so selfevident, that to go about to prove it may appear an idle and superfluous labour: but I must observe, that while we appeal to human probabilities and rational congruities,
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we would not be thought to build our main trust upon them: the Catholic belief rests upon a more lasting and solid foundation, *the promises of CHRIST*; and not upon any congruity of reason. We do not presume to circumscribe the divine providence, or to define in what manner it was becoming his infinite wisdom to govern his Church: 'tis enough for us that we have CHRIST'S insurance for the support of our faith, independent of human probabilities and plausible arguments deduced from the pure lights of reason. But when the one is made plain and undeniable, that is, when the word of GOD is clear on our side, (as we have seen it to be) the other may be allowed to carry weight in conjunction with, or rather, in consequence to these sacred authorities; especially as we are contending with adversaries who lay their principal stress upon meer rational inferences, or strained interpretations of Scripture, and arbitrary proofs.

Now, to state this argument impartially, and to set it in the most unexceptionable light, we will consider the two opposite systems of fallibility and infallibility problematically, and as bare hypotheses, and examine which of the two seems more agreeable to our idea of an infinitely wise and bountiful providence, and most conducive to the respective ends of the preservation of the Church, and to the good of mankind in general. We will also consider, which of the two comes up to the prophetic description

description ISAIAH gives of the Church, saying, that it should be a *path or way* to salvation, that it would *be called the holy way, as fools shall not err therein* *: that is, being travellers in this mortal life, in a strange place, tending to our heavenly country, and ignorant of our road, the Church is our guide ; and, according to the Prophet, is to put us into so direct a road, that the most weak, unlearned and ignorant may pursue his journey securely, without the least risque of missing his way.

I SAY then, first, supposing the system of infallibility to take place, that there is nothing in this system, but what is directly consistent, and also most agreeable to our idea of an omniscient and benign providence, and perfectly reconcilable at the same time with the liberty of the creature ; nothing but what ascertains the perpetuity of his Church, and an unerring rule of faith, and consequently a sure means of salvation to her children. For, to say that Almighty God in his infinite wisdom could not provide for his Church in general in this manner, without abridging each member in particular of his liberty, will be nothing less than blasphemy ; for, tho' every individual is in himself fallible, yet Almighty God could, undoubtedly, not only prevent the whole collection of them from chimering together in an erroneous system of doctrine, but by the direction of an inward ineffable

* ISAIAH, c. 35.

illumination of the Holy Spirit, bring them to conspire unanimously in the profession of one and the same orthodox faith. And to say again, that, providing for his Church in this manner, she would not be secure from error, and her members safe under her influence; or, to pursue the prophets thought, to say, that we should not travel more safely by the direction of an infallible than a fallible guide, is to talk rank nonsense.

ON the other hand, it is certain that the opposite system is attended with every one of these inconveniences, and is manifestly injurious to our idea of an infinitely wise and benign providence; for, if the Church, from its first establishment, is supposed to be out of the shelter of infallibility, and unprovided with the insurances of an unerring guide to govern and direct it, it was consequently in a fluctuating state, *liable to be tost to and fro by every blast of erroneous doctrine,** (as St. PAUL deciphers all those who are out of the pales of the true Church of CHRIST,) and therefore the *gates of hell*, that is, the efforts of satan and the spirit of seduction might, undoubtedly, *have prevailed against it*, and she would be thereby in danger of leading her children out of the way.

AND, supposing it again in this wavering condition, liable to err, and that it had, according to the impeachments of our adversaries, effectually fallen into many gross errors, when

* EPHES. C. 2. V. 14.

the Reformers undertook to discover them to the world, and to awaken it out of its profound lethargy, in which it had dozed for many centuries; as long as they themselves could lay no pretensions to infallibility, and that, by their fundamental principle, infallibility was a meer chimera, and a human invention, they could not certify us, that tho' the Church they undertook to reform was in the wrong, that they themselves were in the right; and then there was still room left for another Reform, or, rather, for Reforms on Reforms, without end; and a wide field opened to Sceptiscism and Deism! What a chaos of confusion, and heap of uncertainties must this produce! For, first, as I said, — in the very act of condemning the Church of error, the Reformers, being avowedly fallible, may themselves have been mistaken. — secondly, the doctrine they pretend to substitute for truth in lieu of this supposed error, which they censure, may itself be an error, and subject to another Reform: on this foundation, in effect, CALVIN reformed on LUTHER, — others on him; and by the same principle, as I just observed, there can be no end of Reforming. They may attempt to pull down, but 'tis impossible they should raise any solid structure, while the foundation is bad and defective.

HERE then, again, the Reformation fails in its very embryo, and proves abortive. Instead of drawing mankind out of the state of error and darkness, it plunges him into an abyss of darkness,
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and a labyrinth of errors, out of which no Reformation, set up on the same defective principles, can possibly extricate him.

AND how inconsistent this system of fallibility is with our idea of an infinite wisdom and goodness, providing for the preservation of his Church, must be obvious to every one, from the foregoing premises. We don't, indeed, for our own parts, as I said before, build our faith on these rational congruities, but upon the express promises of CHRIST to his Church; yet, with our adversaries, who give so much to reason, these inferences deserve their weight.

AFTER what has been urged in behalf of the Catholic cause, to argue the fallibility of the Church from reputed actual errors, she is pretended to have fallen into, (which is the Protestants last and principal shift) is no less ridiculous than groundless and illogical. For, besides that it is begging the point in question; — besides that the objection has been, in substance obviated, and implicitly refuted already, I say, the reasoning itself is moreover fallacious, unconclusive, and directly derogatory from the divine authorities above alledged. To argue, indeed from a real effect to a cause, or, from an act to a capacity, that is, from the *actual exercise of a power to the Power itself*, is entirely logical and conclusive: thus, for instance, from the *act of motion*, we conclude the *power of motion*, and a *rational being*, from the *exercise of reason*; and that man must
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throw up all pretensions to reason and common sense, who takes it into his head to dispute it. But, to argue from a *supposed* or a *doubtful act* to an *absolute power*; or, from a *fictional effect* to a *real cause*, is wholly illogical. Yet this is the case of our Reformers in the present debate, or rather, their case is much worse, while they fasten the character of *fallibility* on the Church, or a capacity of erring, upon grounds not only *supposititious* and *imaginary*, but in direct contradiction to CHRIST's solemn promise of her *infallible capacity*. In a word, the Protestant argumentation stands thus, *The church has (to their thinking) actually erred; therefore CHRIST has not vested her with infallibility, and therefore his promises literally importing it, must have a different tendency or meaning.*

THE Catholic reasons in a different manner—CHRIST, says he (who being the increated wisdom and truth, can neither deceive, nor be deceived) *has absolutely promised to preserve his Church from error, therefore, in consequence to this promise, she has not erred, and can not err.*

WHICH of these two argumentations is most rational and most christian, and consequently most conclusive, I submit to every impartial judge. The respective merit of the one and the other will appear still in a clearer light considered in a parallel instance. — A Deist, reading the sacred writings, contemns the simplicity of the style, affects to be shocked at the hidden mysteries and
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the many surprising passages therein contained; and, weighing them in the ballance of human understanding, concludes them to be fabulous, or, at least, unworthy of the credit of revealed truths. — The Christian, on the other hand, being convinced from innumerable marks of credibility, of the revelation of the scriptures, believes the contents, howsoever surprising and seemingly beyond belief, upon the divine authority.

THE case, I say, between Protestants and us is exactly parallel: CHRIST, as plain as words can speak, has insured the charter of infallibility to his Church; he has moreover constituted her the definitive judge of controversies, and has enjoined an unlimited obedience to her decisions. *He, says he, that hears you, hears me; he that despises you, despises me**. And again, *If he does not hear the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen and publican†*.

THE Catholic therefore, relying upon the fidelity of CHRIST's promises, is under no apprehensions of being led out of the way in taking the Church for his guide, and, in submitting to her, without hesitation or limitation, is convinced that he obeys CHRIST himself in his Church, his representative.

THE Protestant, on the contrary, presumes to canvass her decisions, and to try them over again at the private tribunal of his own judgment; and, as one wrong step is generally followed by ano-

* ST. LUKE ch. 10. v. 16. † MATT. ch. 18. v. 17.

ther, he dares to boggle at some tenets, to discard others, and, upon the issue, to renounce entirely her juridical prerogative : and, in order to cover the unwarrantableness of this proceeding, and to give it at least the appearance of a sanction from divine authority, he is under a necessity of misconstruing, or straining to an alien sense, the clear declarations of CHRIST, which establish and confirm to the Church her charter.

THIS, in epitome, is the whole system of the much-boasted Reformation ; (but particularly, as far as it affects the article of Church authority) —how much short of answering, in any degree, our idea of that pompous title, I appeal to the sense of every man divested of passion and prejudice. For, first, in lieu of bringing her magnified performance to the standard of clear Scripture, that is to the plain word of GOD, she, at her setting out, and in the most fundamental point, recedes from the obvious literal meaning of the text, to intrude upon us her own forced interpretations, with the visible marks of drift and design in this unfair dealing. — Secondly, instead of calculating her work, for the stability of the Church, and the good of mankind in general, (which is the true and natural idea of a godly Reformation) it is attended with every consequence destructive of these desirable purposes. And this miscarriage gives at once a mortal blow to the Reformation, and clenches the Catholic cause ; for, the want of weight in their scale, must necessarily throw the ballance into ours. In a word, if the Church

cannot be proved to be fallible, she is of consequence in full possession of the opposite prerogative, — if the principal indictment has failed, tho' the combined endeavours of wit, disingenuity, and the spirit of innovating have concurred to make it good, all other impeachments of actual errors must be deemed unjust and groundless.

HOWEVER, waving this invincible presumption in our favour, we are ready to put the lesser controversies to the same issue, *viz.* to be tried by the plain words of scripture; not meaning hereby, as I observed in the beginning, to give up the Church's charter of infallibility, or her right of being the legal arbiter of religious controversies; but, out of condescendance to our adversaries, waving her privilege, flattering ourselves, that their remaining impeachments will appear as defenseless and unwarrantable, at this tribunal, as their principal indictment.

N. B. I HAVE superseded an application of the proofs of the Church's prerogative of infallibility to the Roman Catholick Church; that is, to the Church in communion with Rome, as a conclusion, supposed to follow directly from its premises, or implicitly understood — first, because the present contest is only subsisting between the Reformed Churches and her. — Secondly, because she is acknowledged to be the Mother Church; the Church from which all the Protestant Churches deserted, and from which they derive the only pretensions they have of being a
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Church themselves. And lastly and principally, because she both does assert, and always has asserted her claim to infallibility ; the Reformers have as constantly and unanimously renounced it, and no other Church ever dared put in for it.



CHAP. II.

The article of spiritual supremacy ; or, the being of a visible head of the Church, impartially considered and fully proved.

TO the prerogative of the Church's infallibility accedes, next, the spiritual Supremacy of her head, which is the band and cement of unity ; because, with him we become *one flock and one shepherd*. JOHN ch. 10. v. 16. While these prerogatives subsist, the very attempt towards a Reformation is manifestly temerarious and chimerical ; and, in the want of either of them, the constitution of the Church, and the beauty and harmony of its œconomy, would be imperfect : like a kingdom without a ruler, or a city stript of its bullworks and fortifications, it would become a prey to, and the scorn and derision of its enemies. For, if she is a fallible Church, she can be reputed no better than the mistress of error, or, as the *blind leading the blind* ; the consequence whereof would be, from the asseveration of our blessed Lord, —that

both she herself, and those she conducts, must sooner or later fall into the *pit of perdition*; that is, that she must come to inevitable ruin; and, being destitute of a visible head, she is consequently in a state of anarchy and confusion. On the other hand, under the tenure of the first prerogative she is out of the reach of impeachment of error; and, by virtue of the second, her authority is uncontrollable. An invasion on the one is Heresy, on the other Schism, anathematised by CHRIST as a rebellion of the first magnitude.

WHILE, then, the Church makes good these respective claims, the authors of the late religious Revolutions, instead of reaping the merit of becoming Reformers, can be reputed no better than rebels to their Mother Church, and invaders on her undoubted rights and privileges: and, as long as the Church rests on this double basis, *infallibility* and *supremacy*, 'tis impossible her structure should ever fail, and equally impossible that a pretended Reformation, levelled at its destruction, should ever succeed.

IT was therefore manifestly the Reformers interest to leave no stone unmoved in order to undermine this double foundation of their Mother Church; but interest and justice don't always keep pace together, and I hope to prove it to be directly the Reformers case in the point in question.

THE miscarriage and injustice of their undertaking, as far as it was an attempt on the Church's charter of infallibility, is what we have already

ready fully considered, and thoroughly evinced, in the last controversy, from undeniable evidence of Scripture, the Fathers, and from other rational inferences. That the doctrine of supremacy is equally supported by the inspired writings, and strenuously abetted by their faithful interpreters, the primitive Fathers; that is, that there is a visible head of the Church, constituted by CHRIST as his vicar and representative, and vested by him with an absolute spiritual jurisdiction over the whole body of the Church, will, I apprehend, appear no less evident to every equitable judge, after an unprejudiced perusal of the following extracts from the revealed and ecclesiastical authorities.

SECTION I.

The supremacy of St. PETER, and his successors, proved from clear and positive texts of Scripture.

SAINTE PETER was that privileged apostle whom our blessed Lord was pleased to pitch upon, out of the rest of the college, to be the deputy governor of his Church, and vicar upon earth. His patents are his successors credentials for their pretensions to the same prerogative, and a plain relation of his investiture, from the evangelical history, is our voucher to the truth of the fact, and the consequences resulting from it.

AFTER our blessed Saviour had triumphed over death, by his glorious resurrection, he made several visits, for the space of forty days, in his
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34 *The Supremacy of St. PETER, &c.*

resuscitated state, to his dejected disciples, for the support of their trust in him, as their Messiah and Redeemer; for their comfort under their late dereliction; for their own instruction for the time to come, and for the perpetual instruction of his Church, which was to be founded, by their apostolical labours, to the end of time.

IN the first of these comfortable visits, appearing to the apostles gathered together, he conferred upon them, indiscriminately, their apostolic charge, saying, *As my father sent me, so I send you, &c**. But, appearing afterwards to St. PETER, St. JOHN, St. JAMES, St. THOMAS, &c, he singled out St. PETER from the rest, and made a triple demand of a profession of his pre-eminent love, saying, SIMON, *lovest thou me more than these, &c||?* And, in return for it, gives him a threefold charge of his lambs and sheep; saying, *feed my lambs, feed my sheep, &c†*; under which allusions are clearly understood, as we shall presently shew, the whole body of the Church; the pastors and the flock; that is, the subaltern governors and their subjects. This, in effect, was only a confirmation of a prior commission he had given him on that solemn occasion, when he changed his name; telling him, *thou art PETER, that is a rock, and upon this rock I will build my Church, &c.* — *To thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven ‡.*

* ST. JOHN, ch. 20. v. 21. || ST. JOHN, ch. 21. v. 15. † *ibid.*

‡ MATT. ch. 16. v. 18.

HERE then, are solemn declarations of CHRIST to St. PETER, which cannot be supposed to be void of a peculiar meaning: the Catholic, and, indeed, the obvious meaning of them, implies a particular and separate commission, to that apostle, of superintendancy and command: for, to begin with the first quoted Text, *feed my lambs, feed my sheep, &c.* what ever was meant, what can be meant by those metaphors and allusions in the scripture language, but the whole body of the Church, comprehended under these several denominations? And therefore our blessed Lord, by commissioning his apostle to *feed his lambs and sheep*, what else can he be supposed to intend, but that he should look on them as his flock, and behave to them as their shepherd?

THE circumstances, in which this commission was delivered, confirm our presumption that this, and nothing else, could be the meaning of it: for instance, the circumstance of demanding of this apostle an extraordinary and pre-eminent degree of love, was but a preparatory and requisite disposition to qualify him for the intended prerogative of becoming deputy governor of his Church, or pastor of his flock, which he himself had loved to such a degree as to lay down his life for its sake; for, by no other token could the apostle give a proof of his being worthy to succeed to the pastoral charge, than by testifying his love for the head pastor himself, CHRIST JESUS. The other circumstance of CHRIST's singling out St. PETER from the other apostles
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36 *The supremacy of St. PETER, &c.*

and disciples then present, when he delivered to him this respective charge, is a plain indication of a conveyance of a peculiar and distinctive power to him on this solemn occasion; because, as I hinted above, the general apostolic charge had been imparted in common to him with the rest of his fellow apostles before, saying to them, *as my father sent me, I send you, &c* *; therefore on this other occasion there was a separate and personal commission given, a distinctive prerogative, whereby even they themselves became a part of this apostle's care.

OUR blessed Lord had insinuated these intentions on another occasion, when he said to him (alluding to his infirmity in denying him just before his passion) *SIMON, SIMON, behold Satan has desired to have thee—but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, confirm thy brethren*†.

As the rest of the apostles were confirmed in grace by the descent of the Holy Ghost, indiscriminately, upon them all, they were certainly equal to St. PETER in the participation of this gift, as well as in the apostleship: this direction then of their Lord and master to him must have some other tendency or meaning; and none else could it be but to give him a distinctive prerogative, by constituting him their head and superior. And it is evident, from several passages of the evangelical history, that

* JOHN, c. 20.

† LUKE, c. 22. v. 31. 32.

they

they unanimously respected him in this capacity ; and that he himself as constantly acted in the exercise of it. For instance, in the election of St. MATHIAS to the apostleship, in order to fill up the place of the traitor JUDAS, St. PETER took upon him the speech to the whole assembly, and prescribed the method of election ; and the rest acquiesced in his directions : In consequence thereto the lot fell upon MATHIAS, and he was entered into the list of the twelve, a member of the apostolic college. St. CHRYSOSTOM quotes this act of St. PETER as an undoubted proof and an actual exercise of his superior jurisdiction over his brethren—*see, says he, how he acknowledges the flock entrusted to him, how he is the prince of the choir ; he had reason to act here the first of all with authority, having them all delivered into his hands**. It is moreover observed, that whenever the evangelists occasionally give a catalogue of the apostles, St. PETER is always placed at the head of the list ; tho' neither prerogative of age, nor priority of vocation, entitled him to this precedency ; for St. ANDREW was reputed the elder, was the first called to the apostleship, and was the means of bringing his brother to the participation of the same privilege.

WHAT is still more remarkable, when their divine master paid the tribute for all that blessed company, he laid down a double stipend for

* CHRYS. Hom, 3. in Act.

himself and St. PETER, levelling him, as it were, by this token, with himself, and associating him into a partnership of government.

FROM several other instances, recorded in the sacred History, besides that I just hinted upon the election of St. MATTHIAS to the apostleship, it is equally clear that he constantly took upon him the exercise of his prerogative. Thus, after their miraculous illumination, by the descent of the Holy Ghost, he was the first that opened the ministry of the word; the first who dared publicly to assert his master's cause and to promulge his law; and the blessing of Heaven seconded his generous zeal, the conversion of three thousand souls being the fruits of this first sermon. It was he that took upon him the defence of his fellow apostles against the insurrections and malicious cavils of the invidious Jews. The first miracle, in confirmation of the truth of the Gospel, was wrought by St. PETER. The vocation of the Gentiles was revealed to him. He was the first sent on the employ—and the conversion of CORNELIUS the Centurion was the first fruits of Gentility and darkness brought to the light of truth thro' his means.

Now, I put the question again; Can all these distinctions shewn to this apostle be without a particular meaning? And what meaning can we fix upon them but what they import in their own nature singly, or as collected and compared one with the other, of supposing St.

PETER

PETER to be the head of the sacred college, constituted such by CHRIST, and acknowledged as such by the rest of the apostles?

AND, if we look back on the other solemn declaration made to this apostle, *Thou art a rock, &c.* and the promise annexed to it, *To thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, &c.* * These connected together, the natural import of the words, and their concomitant circumstances, concur to establish his undoubted prerogative: for, at this time, our blessed Lord drew out the plan of his Church; he himself being the corner or fundamental stone, appoints this apostle as a part of the foundation, or the stone resting on himself, and on which the whole superstructure was to depend—*upon this rock will I build my Church;* and in consequence to this he delivers to him the keys, which, in the metaphorical language of the Scripture, ever denotes superintendency, command, and a deputation of power.

To object to the first part of this text—that the Church was built on St. PETER's faith and not on his Person—as it is a meer arbitrary interpretation of the words, and straining them from their natural import and meaning, so it has been often answered beyond a reply—that, tho' St. PETER's faith (as ABRAHAM's faith heretofore) was the meritorious cause of the respective promises made by

* MATT. C. 16. V. 18. 19.

Almighty God to one and the other, yet the promises themselves were undoubtedly given to their persons ; *viz*, to ABRAHAM, That he should be the father of nations—to St. PETER, That he, CHRIST, would build his Church upon him. In this sense, as we shall presently shew, the holy Fathers universally understood them ; and, indeed, words must be divested of their proper and natural signification, if the text is to be tortured and misconstrued into any other meaning.

BUT now, supposing this apostle's prerogative clear and beyond dispute, it remains still to prove it hereditary to his successors ; which, indeed, is the heart of the cause, and, if left undecided, we should continue in a state of darkness and uncertainty.

As a preliminary towards clearing up this point I must premise, what is well deserving our notice, that there has been a lineal descent of supreme pastors from St. PETER in an uninterrupted succession to this day ; which is the more remarkable, since the same cannot be traced from any other member of the apostolic college, and is a plain manifestation of CHRIST's extraordinary and perpetual providence over his Church in this particular. Our adversaries have been so far aware of the notoriety of this succession, as a fact not to be contested, and of the natural consequences flowing from it, *viz*, of St. PETER's prerogative being entailed on his descendants, and becoming, as it were, their legal

legal and natural inheritance, that, precisely on this account, they have made it their principal business to impugn this apostle's personal right; but, how vainly, we have already and shall immediately further shew. In a word, St. PETER's right cannot be shook, being founded on CHRIST's indefeasible promises; his successors claim to the prerogative is in right of him, and rests upon the same indefectible foundation.

THE arguments urged in the last controversy for the extension of CHRIST's promises of the Church's infallibility to the end of the world, plead equally for the perpetuity of St. PETER's supremacy to his successors; for similar, or rather identical causes produce identical effects; *to wit*, the constitution and government of the Church was to subsist to the end of the world; CHRIST's divine ordinances and institutions regarding his Church were not temporary, that is, were not limited to the apostles time or to their persons: It is ridiculous to imagine it, and inconsistent with our idea of his paternal, omniscient providence over his Church; therefore what privileges CHRIST gave to his Church at one time, sealed and insured by his neverfailing promise, belong to her at all times, and are her inherent prerogative; and, by parity of reason, and in virtue of the like positive promises of CHRIST, St. PETER's prerogative becomes his successors inheritance.

I forbear to tire the reader with an unnecessary repetition of our foregoing many proofs,
f these

41 *The supremacy of St. PETER, &c.*

these hints, with the application of what we offered before, we flatter ourselves may be satisfactory to an unprejudiced reader ; and whatever else might be added would be insufficient to convince a person biased by passion and interest alone against all reason.

HOWEVER, the sentiments of the ancient Fathers on this celebrated subject must not be passed over in silence ; for, tho' the method I proposed in the management of the subject of this Essay will not permit me to enlarge on these irrefragable testimonies, yet the deference we owe to them, and even self-interest, will not allow me to omit them entirely. The authority of the Fathers is what all parties must respect, and, for our own part, we are so confident of their being wholly on our side of the question, that we are proud to own it manifestly our interest to put the issue of the debate to their decision. I'll content myself with secreting, out of a cloud of these uncontestable evidences, two or three who must be reputed unexceptionable for their authority and antiquity.

OF these St. IRENEUS is one of the most ancient, living in the next age to the apostles, whose verdict cannot be refused. Now this great man, addressing the Roman Church, gives the following testimony to the supremacy of her head as ample as the most sanguine adherent to her interest could pronounce at this time of day. " By apostolical tradition, which
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“ the Roman bishops have preserved, all se-
 “ paratists are confounded ; for, to this Church,
 “ by reason of its more powerful principality,
 “ ’tis necessary that all Churches have re-
 “ course *. The most professed zealot for the
 papacy could not, as I said, assert its prero-
 gative in more full and expressive terms.

St. CYPRIAN, whose suffrage is as unexcep-
 tionable, both for his antiquity and his merit,
 as the former, living in the third age, and dy-
 ing a glorious martyr in the defence of truth,
 writing to the holy pope of that time, St.
 CORNELIUS, who also sealed his faith by the
 effusion of his blood, he styles *Rome the chair*
of St. PETER, and the principal Church from
which the unity of priesthood is derived †.

St. HIEROM also addresses pope DAMAS-
 IUS in the following strong and emphatical terms,
 “ I am joined in communion with your holi-
 “ ness, that is, with the chair of PETER ;
 “ upon this rock I know the Church is built.
 “ Whoever eats the lamb out of this house
 “ is prophane—whosoever is not in the ark
 “ shall perish in the deluge §.

St. AMBROSE observes that ANDREW follow-
 ed CHRIST sooner than PETER, yet that AN-
 DREW did not receive the principality, but PE-
 TER ‡.

* St. IRENEUS, l. 3. c. 3. † CYPRI. Ep. 4. ad Corn.

§ HIER. Ep. 57. ad DAMAS. ‡ AMBRO. in 2 COR. 12.

44 *The supremacy of St. PETER, &c.*

St. AUSTIN tells the Donatists that *in the see of Rome the principality of the Catholic Church was ever acknowledged* *.

St. CHRYSOSTOM's sentiments on this head are evident from what we have quoted from him already on the election of St. MATHIAS; and he is consonant to himself, in this point, on many other occasions, which for brevity's sake I pass over.

BUT the words of St. OPTATUS MILEVITANUS to PARMENIORE a Donatist Prelate, are too remarkable to be omitted. "You can't pretend, says he to him, to be ignorant that St. PETER held the first episcopal chair in the city of Rome, in which PETER, head of all the apostles sat——In which one chair, unity might be maintained by all, lest the rest of the apostles should each claim his own separate chair; so that he is now a Schismatic, and an offender, who erects another against this single chair. In this one chair, which is the first of the properties of the Church, PETER first sat——to him succeeded LINUS——to him CLEMENT, &c. Give you now an account of the origin of your chair; you, who claim to yourselves the Holy Church †."

I'll conclude the quotations from these ancient irrefragable vouchers for the Supremacy, with a short extract out of an emphatical discourse on this subject, spoken on the eve of the

* AUG. Ep. 162.

† St. OPTAT. MELIV. lib. 2.
cont. PARM.

feast of St. PETER, by ELEATHERIUS bishop of Lyons, who lived at the beginning of the fifth century. "First CHRIST entrusted him with
 " his lambs, next with his sheep; because he
 " made him not only a shepherd, *but the shepherd*
 " *of shepherds.* PETER then feeds the lambs,
 " he also feeds the sheep, he feeds both the
 " young and the mother, *he rules both subjects*
 " *and prelates*; he is therefore a shepherd over
 " all; for, besides lambs and sheep there is no
 " thing in the Church."

THESE are a few of the innumerable testimonies from antiquity for the Catholic doctrine on the subject under debate, which the more clear and undeniable, the more steadfast the Church's tenure, so well supported. For, as Scripture is the test we have agreed to appeal to in this controversy, so the ancient Fathers, as I observed before, must be allowed to be the faithful and most unexceptionable interpreters of these sacred records; and therefore, while they are so evidently on our side of the question, the cause of the Reformation must be owned to be here also deficient; and every thing they pretend to oppose to the Church's charter of Supremacy, is to be reputed no more than meer chicaneries and idle evasions, or, at best, but as negative arguments against positive proofs—such is their inference from St. PAUL's contest with St. PETER in the council of Hierusalem—their precarious supposition of this apostle's not presiding

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at that council,—and other trivial objections of the same nature.

IN the mean while, as our adversaries must be judged, from the premises, to have failed in their principal plea, and what, in this debate, by their own rule, should be the decisive tribunal—the clear words of Scripture; it is to be expected, at least, as I observed in the foregoing controversy, that they produce invincible reasons from the nature of the thing in further support of their opposition, in order to its retaining the shadow or appearance of a godly Reformation. How far they have missed of coming up to these just expectations we will now examine.

S E C T I O N II.

The Supremacy further evinced, from reason and prescriptive possession, in a continual succession of pastors from St. PETER, constantly asserting their prerogative: and the opposition proved to be destitute of every foundation, either from authority or reason.

THE ringleader of the Reformation, MARTIN LUTHER, when he renounced his obedience to the Church and its head, in order to screen himself from the imputation of being a rebel, was under a necessity of impugning the Church in her two fundamental articles of Infallibility and Supremacy. It had, indeed, been more for his own credit, and for the reputation
of

of the Reformation in general, if he had managed his opposition and vented his resentment with more temper, charity, and humility than it is known he did. Even his great panegyrist, doctor TILLOTSON, unwarily avows him to be *a bold, rough man*; tho' he deems him *a fit wedge* for the knotty work he had in hand. (A character better becoming a hero of the bear-garden, than an apostle or reformer) And it is certain that his violent, outrageous and insolent behaviour favoured very little of the spirit of the Gospel, and of that meekness so much recommended by our divine master in words and example, and strictly followed by all who ever engaged in the apostolical charge.

BUT, laying aside personal reflections, we will proceed to examine into the merits of the cause. The great man, whom I just named, archbishop TILLOTSON, speaking of the point in debate, the article of the Supremacy, confidently pronounces the following Judgment upon it — he says, *That it is not only an indefensible, but an impudent Cause as ever was undertaken — that there is not any tolerable argument for it, and a thousand invincible arguments against it — that the histories and records of all ages are a perpetual demonstration against it* *. A modern author is pleased to deliver himself, on the subject, with a similar assurance, tho' both the one and the other are as destitute of proofs, as their assertion is

* TILLOT. Serm. 49. page 588.

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wide from truth— but railing is a compendious way of managing a bad cause. Bold assertions occasionally supply the want of proofs with credulous readers, who take what is told them upon the word and credit of their teachers, without further examination: But whatsoever these swaggering declamers are pleased to roar out against us, we are not to be silenced with noise; nor will powder and smoke scare us; and therefore, in answer to this hectoring challenge, we are bold to say, That we have not only *tollerable* but *convincing arguments* on the Catholic side of the question; and that what is insinuated by our opponents against it, is no more than meer sophistry or slander.

FIRST, the divine institution of CHRIST, which we have already proved from clear evidences of the New Testament, we think to be an *invincible argument* for the Supremacy.— secondly, the suffrages of the primitive Fathers, which we have just produced, are such proofs, as, in common modesty, every one ought to submit to; and therefore shews our cause not to be an *impudent indefensible cause*, when supported by such unexceptionable authorities. — thirdly, prescriptive possession, which by the concessions of our adversaries we have had for many hundred years, and, by our own calculation, (as we have proved already and shall further) from the establishment of Christianity, makes it clear that all *histories and records* are so far from being a *demonstration against it*, that they are on the contrary

contrary unanimous vouchers for the Justice of our pretensions.

WHAT I have already remarked of the lineal descent of the head pastors of the Church in a continual succession from St. PETER, which cannot be traced from any of the rest of the apostles, is a visible instance of the peculiar providence of heaven in preserving this succession, and of the accomplishment of CHRIST'S promises made to St. PETER, when he constituted him his vicar or deputy governor of his Church.

THIS was one of the prevailing motives which kept St. AUSTIN within the pales of the Catholic Church. His words are very remarkable: *A succession, says he, of bishops from the see of St. PETER, (to whom CHRIST, after his resurrection, committed his flock) to the present episcopacy, holds me in the Catholic communion* *. And that the successors of St. PETER have, from the beginning and at all times, asserted their prerogative of Spiritual Supremacy, will appear evident from the following plain and uncontestable facts, which are only a few out of the many that *histories and records of every age* furnish us with.

IN the next age to the apostles St. VICTOR, as we gather from ecclesiastical history, sitting at that time in St. PETER'S chair, intimidated the Churches of lesser Asia with menaces of

* St. AUST. lib. 3. cont. epist. fund. ch. 3.

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excommunication for their undue celebration of Easter *. Now this Act must be undoubtedly reputed an exercise of his superior jurisdiction over those Churches.

IN the third age St. STEPHEN, pope, acted with the same vigour, in the exercise of his authority, on the occasion of the then controverted dispute about the validity of heretical baptism.

THE great council of Chalcedon, held in the year 451, in their epistle to the pope, stile him *their father and their head* †, which, if it is not acknowledging his supremacy, words cannot express it, or must be divested of their proper and natural meaning.

St. GELASIUS, pope, who lived in the fifth century, asserts the supremacy of his see from the appointment of CHRIST, and his promise so often alledged to St. PETER, — *thou art PETER, and upon this rock will I build my Church* ‡.

To omit a cloud of other witnesses which the reader may have recourse to in sundry treatises on this subject, I'll conclude with the words of one of the pope's legates opening his commission to the general council of Ephesus, An. 341. "No one says he, doubts, nay, "it is a thing known to all ages, that St. "PETER, (prince and head of the apostles,

* EUSEB. lib. 5. ch. 24. † Tom. 4. conc. p. 833, & seq. ‡ Tom. 4. conc. lab. p. 1261. E.

" who

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“ who is the pillar of faith, and the foundati-
 “ on of the Catholic Church) received from
 “ CHRIST the keys of the kingdom of heaven,
 “ and had the power of binding and loosing
 “ sins given him ; and who to this time,
 “ and always, lives in his successors, and ex-
 “ ercises his authority—whose *canonical suc-*
 “ *cessor, pope CELESTIN, holding his place, has*
 “ sent us to this council to represent his per-
 “ son *.

ALSO in the general council of Chalcedon, consisting of 520 bishops, An. 451, the legates of St. LEO, in deposing DIOSCORUS, stile St. PETER *the rock and foundation of the Church* †.

NOW as this is the literal sense, or the identical words, of that apostle's installment in his prerogative—as these councils are admitted for œcumenical by our adversaries—as the Fathers of the councils were so far from contesting these solemn declarations, or disputing the Pope's prerogative, that they submitted to his authority, and acquiesced in the decisions of his representatives—What can we conclude from all these evidences but that the supremacy of St. PETER and his successors was the universal sense and belief of the whole Catholic world at that early and pure age of the Church ; and that, therefore, our adversaries (in pretending to date the epoch of Su-

* ACTS 3. CONC. EPES. T. 3. CONC. LAB. p. 626. A † ACTS
 3. T. 4. P. 425. C.D. ‡ MATT. 16. v. 18.

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premacY from PHOCAS the emperor, and his flattery to the bishop of Rome then sitting in the chair) fabulously and maliciously contradict the foregoing testimonies, which deduce it from the earliest times, that is, from the birth of Christianity? And Dr. TILLOTSON must also be strangely mistaken, or, what is worse, as he cannot be supposed to be a stranger to the avowed historical facts of those ancient times, must be passionately prejudiced, and as unsincere and disingenuous as his brethren, in averring *that the histories and records of all ages are a perpetual demonstration against it.*

THEY, with as little foundation, raise their clamours against the pretended exorbitant power of the papacy:—They may affect to represent it in the most odious light, as a despotic, arbitrary and tyrannical usurpation—invectives will go down with the credulous vulgar, and puzzling the question may set their adherents at rest, in leaving it, like a drawn battle, undecided; but can never touch the heart of the cause. For, it is not what they please to impose on our belief, or even what may be the particular sentiments of an indiscreet zealot, or the private opinion of a single Divine or two of the Catholic Church, which we are obliged to maintain, or undertake to contend for. What we assert, is, That there is a visible head of the Church constituted by CHRIST as his Vicar, who is the centre of unity, or the means by which we become together

gether, as united and subordinate to him, *one fold and one shepherd* *.

THIS we look upon as a providential blessing calculated for the preservation of the Church.—The jurisdiction we attribute to this pastor is purely spiritual, abstracted from all temporal pretensions, or imaginary encroachments. This, infine, is the system of our belief in this point, delivered in our professions of faith, and set forth in all our catechisms, as the terms of communion; and is what, I flatter myself, I have sufficiently evinced in the foregoing premises from the divine institution, the primitive Fathers, and the prescriptive possession of the Church from the foundation of Christianity. In consequence hereto, the opposition of our adversaries must appear to be as manifestly destitute of every support from Scripture, authority of the Fathers, or reason; and, as it sprung from the machinations of pride and rebellion, so it evidently keeps up and nourishes the same spirit.

OUR first parents forfeited their original justice, and their settlement in the terrestrial paradise, by aiming at independency, in listening to the infernal Tempter, telling them, *you shall be as Gods* †; and by a like levelling principle our pretended Reformers shut themselves out of the pales of the Church. An absolute

* St. JOHN ch. 10. v. 16. † GEN. ch 3.

independance, and a liberty of thinking and acting as they should please, was what they equally aimed at, and effectually introduced, by discarding the articles of Infallibility and Supremacy. The unavoidable consequence of this step was confusion, disorder, and a total destruction of unity. So that instead of correcting abuses and banishing errors, (which is the natural idea of a godly Reformation) they laid the foundation of every abuse, opened a gap to Latitudinarianism and Deism, and established a state of Anarchy.



C H A P. III.

The article of the Real Presence of CHRIST's body and blood, in the blessed sacrament of the Eucharist, considered.

AMONG the Tenets of the Catholic Church, which the authors and abettors of the Reformation have thought fit to brand with the imputation of error, the article of the Real Presence of CHRIST's body and blood in the holy Sacrament of the Eucharist may be reputed one of the most fundamental; because on the resolution of this single question is to be determined whether the impeachment of Idolatry, which many of the Reformers
are

are fond of fastening upon us for our adoration of CHRIST as really present in the venerable sacrament of the Eucharist, has any appearance of equity and reason; or whether, on the contrary, we have not an undoubted right to retort the charge of ingratitude on them, as well as infidelity, for disbelieving and rejecting so singular and ineffable a blessing.

BUT be our case, in this contested point, what it will, we have a principal and leading part of the Reformation sharers with us of our fate. For LUTHER, the first Patriarch of the Reformation, with his followers, is as sanguine for the Real Presence as the most zealous Catholic; and tho' (in explaining the mystery by his notion of *impanation*, or a *consubstantiation* of the bread with CHRIST's body, in lieu of a *transubstantiation*, or, a change of the substances, which is the Catholic belief,) he renders it more irreconcilable to reason, and unintelligible; yet he agrees with us in the main point of a Real and Corporal Presence; that is, in the very heart of the difficulty, in which it becomes a stumbling block and stone of offence to the rest of the Reformers. And such is his condescension in regard to the Catholic Tenet, as to think the disparity of opinions between him and us to be a matter of indifference. *I have taught, says he, heretofore, and yet sustain, that it avails little, and is a question of no great moment, whether we believe the bread to remain or not in the Eucharist, or to*
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be transubstantiated *. But, it is certain that he does not shew himself so well affected to his dissenting brethren, the abettors of the Commemorative and Symbolical System, whom, on this head, he lashes with the severest censures and the bitterest imprecations. In his *confessio parva*, wrote about a year before he died, he calls them *blasphemers against GOD and CHRIST, a pack of liars — cursed, proud and arrogant spirits; bread-eaters, wine-drinkers, soul-murderers!* And in a Tract wrote some while after the former, and when he was nearer his end, he repeats and confirms his aforesaid sentiments in terms equally home and significant, — *we seriously think*, says he, *the ZUINGLIANS and all the sacramentarians, to be Hereticks, and separated from GOD's Church, who deny the Body and Blood of CHRIST to be taken in the mouth of our body, in the blessed sacrament* †.

IN the mean while, in consequence to these material differences subsisting between the Reformers, the following apposite questions obviously occur. — first, I would desire to know of Dr. TILLOTSON, or any other panegyrist of this head Patriarch of the Reformation — how their hero's honour and orthodoxy is to be saved in this controverted point? For if Catholics are here reprovable, how is he, who is in the same belief, as far as it is an object of exception and

* LUTH. de CÆN. dom. contra. ZUING. † LUTH. Thes. cont. Lovan. Thes. 2.

effence to them, to be excused? And tho' his bold attack on the papacy may gloss over his smaller slips, yet if the article in question is a gross error and damnable idolatry, as our opponents pretend, he is confessedly guilty of it, and therefore must be judged either to have wanted sagacity and inspiration to discover the error, or courage to impugn it——Blemishes of too black a dye to be admitted into the character of a head Reformer.

I would also beg leave to put one other question——Is the Reformation a human or divine work? That is——is it to be deemed a meer human device and invention, or as inspired, directed and conducted by the HOLY GHOST? They cannot, for shame, adopt it under the first notion; because, being put on that footing, its credit sinks, and forfeits at once its pretension to an evangelical or godly Reformation; and yet, on the other hand, for a work inconsistent with itself to come from God, is shocking to think, and blasphemy to utter. No, a fabrick composed of repugnant incoherent parts cannot have Almighty God for its architect. The spirit of wisdom and truth could not possibly inspire contradictions, such as are the disparate opinions of the Reformers in the present controversy; viz, a *Real Corporal Presence*, tenaciously defended by LUTHER——a bare *remembrance* or *commemoration* asserted by ZUINGLIUS——A refinement on both by CALVIN in his figurative Symbolical System——and an

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unintelligible

unintelligible jargon of a *Real non-corporal Presence* maintained by the Church of England. The HOLY GHOST, I say, could not inspire such contradictions; if one System is true, the others must be undoubtedly false, or rather all equally false—the products of innovating brains, big with invention. And in whatsoever other points these differences amongst the Reformers occur, the same unanswerable objections return upon them. 'Tis the Catholic Church alone, which having the HOLY GHOST, the spirit of truth for its guide, is always consistent with itself, uniform and unvariable in its doctrine, and therefore, leaving the Reformers to patch up and adjust their own differences as they can, I'll pursue my first design to justify the Catholic Tenet from the imputation of error, by the standard of faith, which they themselves pretend to appeal to—the clear words of Scripture.

To this test then I put the present controversy of the Real Presence, by asserting a *Transubstantiation*, or a *Substantial Change* of bread and wine into the sacred Body and Blood of CHRIST in the sacrament of the Eucharist, in which sense it is the object of our Faith, and one of the terms of a Catholic communion; and which I flatter myself to make good, in the following Section, against the cavils of our adversaries, from uncontestable Evidences of the word of God.

SECTION

SECTION I.

Transubstantiation evinced from clear Scripture.

THE justest and most natural appeal we can make in the present controversy, and what deserves our preferable attention to every other proof, (as Scripture is the test by which our cause is to be tried) will be, I apprehend, to the words of the institution itself of this august Sacrament; because every other proof rests on this basis, and derives its merit and efficacy from it. The institution of the blessed Eucharist is admitted by all hands to have been our blessed Lord's last act and deed, in taking a farewell of his beloved disciples, just as he was entering on the tragical scene of his bitter Passion. It was, moreover, a declaration of his will and testament to his friends, and a legacy or pledge of his love, affection and esteem, to continue with them after his impending separation.

THE singularity and solemnity of each of these circumstances, obviously raise our expectations of some extraordinary event, and some signal testimonies of his friendship; for, as a parting adieu, it must have been most kind and endearing, coming from the heart of an Incarnate Deity, overflowing with love for his intimate friends, from whom he was going to be violently forced away—as a will and testament it should, according to the nature of such deeds, be clear and intelligible—and, as a legacy, it could

not fail of being such as would be worthy of the infinite munificence and benevolence of the doner, and such as would redound to the emolument of the receivers, and be to them a perpetual memorial of their divine benefactor. And, we cannot be so injurious to our blessed Lord, as to doubt of his fulfilling these expectations in every respect, and to their full extent: Therefore to the words of the institution of this august Sacrament we willingly put the issue of this debate.

THEY are the sacred Penmen, the evangelists, from whom we have the relation of this memorable transaction, uniform, plain and unaffected, in the following words: "JESUS took bread
" into his hands, blessed and broke it, and gave
" it to his disciples, saying, *This is my Body*—
" and, blessing the chalice, he gave it to them,
" saying, *drink ye all of this, for this is my Blood*
" *of the New Testament, which shall be shed for*
" *many, unto the remission of sins* *." So St. MATTHEW, and the rest, in identical, or equivalent and synonymous terms—St. LUKE expressing the consecration of the chalice with this variation, still, if possible, more significant, *This is the chalice, the New Testament in my Blood, which shall be shed for you* †.

THESE then are the words of the institution—plain, undisguised and expressive; from which I draw the following natural and obvious inferences—

* MATT. C. 26 v. 27, 28, † LUKE, C. 22. v. 20.

rences — First, that the literal and obvious meaning of the words import a conveyance of CHRIST's body and blood, and a substantial change of bread and wine into them, to this effect—Secondly, I aver this to be so clear, that, supposing it for argument's sake to have been a disputable point, and hitherto undetermined, yet in the hypothesis that our blessed Lord had intended at that time to operate this miraculous change, and to make a conveyance of his Body and Blood to his disciples, he could not have delivered himself in more clear, expressive and significant terms than he did; and therefore, without the most invincible demonstrative arguments to disprove it, the literal interpretation ought to take place, and influence us into a stedfast belief, that this was the real intent and meaning of our Lord and master, and no objections from the testimonies of our senses (as I shall shew hereafter) can be admitted to be of sufficient weight to over-rule these plain, positive assertions of eternal truth. I infer, thirdly, that LUTHER's system of a *consubstantial* Presence of CHRIST's body with the elements of bread and wine, is wholly arbitrary, and inconsistent with the tenor of the text; beause, in this sense the meaning of the words of the institution must stand thus, *This bread is my body*, which proposition is an absolute contradiction, literally understood, importing one thing to be another, *viz*, bread to be CHRIST's body, and therefore directly impossible. Had indeed our blef-

fed Saviour delivered himself in these terms, *Here is my body*; in this case a concomitant Presence of his sacred Body with the elements, by some mystical union possible to the divine power, might have been inferred from it, without implying the like contradiction; but, as our blessed Lord did not express himself in this manner, the Catholick sense ought to prevail; and the literal import of the Words, as the sacred text stands, convey no other idea.

I INFER lastly and principally against our chief adversaries, the abettors of the figurative and symbolical sense, that this system is still more arbitrary, and an absolute alienation and torture of the words from their natural meaning; and as it explains the words of the Institution, *This is my body*, to this effect, *This is the sign or figure of my body*, is a manifest breach of, and a direct violence on the common laws of speech: for, tho' a known and adopted sign, allowed as such by general use, is oftentimes called by the name of the thing it signifies; as, pointing to a picture of the king, we say, *that is the king*, meaning that it represents his royal Person; yet to give a foreign word or thing such an allusion, (being disproportioned, and unfit in itself to signify what it is intended to mean) without previously preparing the hearer, by letting him into our meaning, would be an abuse of words, and an impropriety of speech, and wholly unintelligible. Thus, for instance, was any one to determine within himself that a pebble stone should signify

nify a diamond, and pursuant to this settled idea, without communicating it to any one else, should, pointing to a pebble, say, *that is a diamond*, his language would be unintelligible and ridiculous. And I beg leave to say, that, in the present case, our blessed Saviour's calling *bread* his *body*, &c, (figuratively understood, meaning only the sign of his Body) without a previous declaration of this his meaning, is liable to the same censure of being a speech quite improper and unnatural, and would have been an imposition on the understanding of his apostles, to whom he directed his discourse; and therefore we cannot offer such an indignity to his goodness and wisdom, as to impute to him so gross an absurdity. Our blessed Lord, on an occasion, exhorting his disciples to fly to the divine assistance in all their exigencies, as an insurance of success, encouraged them by this familiar example, *Who*, says he, *of you applying to your carnal parent for a loaf of bread, receives from him instead of it a stone; or begging a fish, is put off with a serpent, &c**? From whence he infers, that his eternal Father will much less deceive them, whenever they have recourse to him — And now, can we believe that he himself, the identical image of his eternal Father's goodness, love and sincerity, would on this occasion trifle with his intimate friends, and

* LUKE ch. II. v. II.

lead them into the grossest mistake; to wit, that at the time that he was delivering to them his last will and testament, and depositing with them a parting legacy, which he expressly declared to be his sacred *Body* and *Blood*, that, I say, in this solemn act of consummate friendship, he would impose upon them a piece of bread, as a meer *figure* and *sign* of his *Body*, in lieu of its *truth* and *reality*, in direct contradiction to his said express declaration; and this without giving them the least previous intimation of his private and hidden meaning? Yet these consequences, and many others of the same nature, as directly flow from our adversaries figurative or symbolical system, as they are shocking to every honest heart and upright mind, and even to common sense, and injurious to the honour, goodness, wisdom and varacity of an incarnate deity, and our most loving Redeemer.

BUT, for the same reason that a previous intimation of his meaning had been requisite for the Apostles, if he had intended to be understood in the *figurative* sense, in order to undeceive them, and to screen himself from the imputation of imposing upon them; for this reason, the literal import of the words was neither shocking to them nor a matter of surprise; because our blessed Lord, had, long before, prepared them for the accomplishment of this mystery, by positively promising to bequeath to them his *Body* and *Blood*, as their spiritual food and
nourishment

nourishment; and therefore, what he did at his last supper, was no more than what they had long expected: the manner in which he did it, of giving it them under the veils of the elementary species, was least repugnant to human sense; and the truth or reality of the Fact, that is, the effectual change of the elements into his Body and Blood (after having seen him convert water into wine, and work innumerable other changes and prodigies) they could have no room to doubt of. For, tho' this present change was not evident to their senses, their divine master's positive declaration of the fact, supported by prior motives of credibility, was a sufficient warrant for the truth of it, without any other testimony.

It is from the sixth chapter of St. JOHN that we gather this prior promise of our blessed Lord to his Disciples, of giving them his Flesh for their spiritual nourishment, and is a corroborative proof of the literal sense of the institution. The words are these — “ The bread I will give is my Flesh, for the life of the world—Amen, I say unto you, unless you eat the Flesh of the son of man, and drink his Blood, you shall not have life in you—He that eateth my Flesh and drinketh my Blood has life everlasting *.”

Now the literal import of these texts contains a manifest prediction, and absolute promise of the

* St. JOHN ch. 6. v. 52, 54, 55.

divine legacy ; viz, of CHRIST'S Flesh and Blood, which he bequeathed afterwards to his Apostles at his last supper ; and therefore his fulfilling this promise at that time, as I said before, could be no subject of surprise, or matter of doubt.

BUT when the rest of the company, who were present with the Apostles at the uttering of this unexpected speech, understanding it in a carnal sense, affected to be shocked and scandalised at it ; saying, *How can this man give us his Flesh to eat and his Blood to drink* * ? Did our blessed Saviour disabuse them of their error, as in charity to their misapprehending him (if he had only meant a figurative or symbolical conveyance and manducation) it might be expected he would, and might easily have done ; and as he effectually did undeceive them, (as I shall presently shew) with regard to their mistake of the manner of the conveyance of his Flesh to them ?—On the contrary, as to the substance of the promise, he confirms it with the solemnest asseveration ; *my Flesh is meat indeed, and my Blood is drink indeed.* —*He that eateth my Flesh and drinketh my Blood abideth in me and I in him* †. And when this incredulous audience still continued inflexible to the solemn asseverations of eternal truth, and separated upon it, muttering to themselves, and calling them *a hard saying, who can bear it* ‡ ? Our blessed Lord hereupon, turning to his A-

* JOHN ch. 6. † ST. JOHN ch. 6. v. 56. ‡ *ibid.*

postles,

postles, said, *And will you also leave me* * ? But they, instead of joining in the infidelity of the others, made the following generous profession of their faith; *we believe*, said they, *and are sure that thou art the Son of the living God* †; which was as much as to say, that how much soever his declarations and promises were surpassing human comprehension, yet they believed them possible to his omnipotent power, and therefore had no reluctance in assenting to the feasibility and veracity of his promises then, and were as little prompted to discredit the actual accomplishment of them afterwards.

HOWEVER, it is objected, by our adversaries to this whole passage, that our blessed Saviour himself, on this occasion, qualified and limited his own saying to a spiritual sense, by adding, *that it is the spirit which quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing—the words I speak to you, they are spirit and life* ‡ — from which they pretend to conclude an exclusion of a corporal conveyance and manducation. But howsoever fond, the abettors of a figurative or symbolical sense, may be of this text, in laying their principal stress upon it, and the foundation of their erroneous system; St. AUSTIN, in his comment on these words, has obviated the objection, and refuted it to my hands. “What then,” says he, “is the meaning of this—*the flesh profiteth nothing*? As

* JOHN ch. 6. † *ibid.* v. 69. ‡ *ibid.* v. 64.

“they,

“ they, the Jews, understood it, as torne to
 “ pieces in a dead body, it profiteth nothing;
 “ put it profiteth animated by the spirit*.”—

That is, as this Doctor further explains himself,
dead flesh cut in the shambles (in which carnal
 sense the Jews apprehended our blessed Savi-
 our's saying, and were charitably disabused by
 him of their error) *profiteth nothing; but it*
profiteth as animated by the spirit.

IN a word, tho' it is a corporal substance
 which we receive in the Sacrament, *viz,*
 CHRIST's sacred Body and Blood; yet it is
 conveyed in a *spiritual manner*—*spiritual*, be-
 cause under another appearance, being couched
 under the veils of bread and wine, and there-
 by the object of faith, and out of the reach of
 our senses—*spiritual*, because bequeathed to
 us, not for our *corporal* but *spiritual* nourishment
 —*spiritual* in all the qualities of it, not be-
 ing confined to the laws of natural bodies,
commensuration as to place and *extension*—
spiritual as to its endowments, being *impassible*,
immortal, *incorruptible*, &c. But had St. AVS-
 TIN been of the Reformers opinion and belief
 of a figurative symbolical sense, he certainly
 went round about the bush in refuting the Jews
 misapprehension in the manner he did; since he
 might have gone nearer to work, in referring
 CHRIST's words to a figurative meaning: and,
 as he did not, 'tis a proof, amongst many others

* St. AUG. in psal. 98.

we shall presently produce, that he was a zealous abettor of the Catholic doctrine.

IN this passage of St. JOHN, ch. 6. we have heard our blessed Saviour confirm the literal sense of the Institution of the Sacrament of his Body and Blood; or rather, anticipatly declare it in the most express and positive terms: and when his hearers affected to be shocked at these declarations, so far was he from revoking them, that he confirmed them by the most solemn asseverations, saying, *my Flesh is meat, indeed; my Blood is drink, indeed.* We have also seen that the Apostles, his faithful adherents, instead of joining with the incredulous disciples, or even questioning their divine master about the possibility of this mystery, (tho' they were every now and then importunate with him for the explanation of his parables, and some dogmatical points much less material) yet here they gave an implicit assent to this mysterious promise: nor does it appear from any part of the New Testament, or from any records of the transactions of the Apostles, that they ever varied a tittle from it. I appeal to St. PAUL, to whom our adversaries can have no exception, for the sentiments of the whole apostolic body.

THIS great Apostle then, writing to the Corinthians, after having recited to them the sacred words of the Institution of this adorable Sacrament, with his divine master's ordinance of repeating it in remembrance of him, that is, as a memorial of his Death and Passion, he concludes

cludes, by enforcing his master's injunction, in these emphatic words. "As often," says he, "as you shall eat this Bread, and drink this Chalice, you shall declare the death of our Lord till he comes : therefore, whosoever shall eat this Bread, and drink the Chalice unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord—for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, *not discerning the Body of our Lord* * : " that is, not remembering that he is eating the *real Body of CHRIST*.

Now whereas this was a dogmatical epistle, it is presumed that, in a point of so great moment as was the essence of this august Sacrament, which the apostle occasionally touched upon, he would have been clear and explicit ; and yet, besides his recital of the words of the institution, without adding any gloss or comment to give it a figurative meaning, (which is a tacit intimation of his contrary belief) his reiterated charge on the unworthy receiver, of being *guilty of the Body and Blood of CHRIST*, is a corroborative proof of his steadfast belief of a Corporal Presence. For, in this sense, it is easily understood how the unworthy receiver is guilty of the abuse and profanation of CHRIST's Body and Blood—In this sense it is literally true that he puts a direct affront and insult on CHRIST's sacred person ; whereas in the other

* Ep. 1. ad Cor. ch. 11. v. 26, 27.

system it is merely indirect and respective, as every other breach of the Commandments is an offence against Almighty God, and every violation of a law is a respective affront offered to the legislator.

Our adversaries affect to oppose to these strong proofs, from this great apostle, for the Real Presence, his calling the elements by their proper names after their consecration. But first, this objection, to mean what our adversaries would have it, viz, that the Elements are not changed after consecration, must make the apostle unsay all he had been saying before, and invalidate the strength of his charge against the unworthy receiver of being *guilty of the* (prophanation of the) *Body and Blood of CHRIST*. The objection, I apprehend, is also in itself trifling and merely elusive; for nothing is more usual in common speech than to call a thing what it had been, before it received its change. Holy Writ itself furnishes us with several instances. Thus it is said to ADAM, *dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return* *. AARON's rod, being changed into a serpent, still retained the name of a rod—they *cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents, but AARON's rod swallowed up their rods* †. And even the Catholic Church, which cannot be supposed to disavow her own tenet, often calls the consecrated Elements by their former names. Of this

* GEN. ch. 3. v. 19.

† EXOD. ch. 7. v. 12.

nature there are figures in discourse allowable from common use : thus amongst the Jews, in the familiar dialect of their language, an entertainment was called *breaking of bread*, as amongst us it is usual to invite a friend to *drink a bottle* ; and yet a man must have a very mean opinion of his friend's sense and understanding, or be next to an idiot himself, to offer to explain his meaning.

BUT we need not go any farther for an answer to this evasive objection than to the text itself, in which the name of *chalice* is indifferently made use of as well as that of *bread* — *He that eateth this bread and drinketh this chalice, &c.* But the *chalice*, according to the concession of our adversaries, by *metonymy*, signifies the contents thereof *continens pro contento* ; and therefore, by parity of reason, by the nomination of *bread* is understood CHRIST'S Body and Blood couched under those sacramental veils. For, supposing this miraculous change, which we have evinced from other proofs, the *metonymy* is as easy and natural in one case as in the other. But, as a final solution to this trifling objection, the apostle himself has obviated it, and explained his own meaning in the foregoing chapter of the same epistle to the Corinthians, where he says, *the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of CHRIST ? and the bread which we break, is it not the participation of the Body of our Lord ?* for

* 1 COR. ch. 10. v. 16.

how can it be the Communion or the participation of the Body and Blood of CHRIST, unless the Body and Blood were really couched under the sacramental species?

I SHOULD not have dwelt so long upon this frivolous objection, which with every unprejudiced judgment must carry no appearance of a difficulty, if our adversaries did not seem to lay a stress upon it. Indeed, it is surprising how persons of wit, learning or sagacity could, seriously, give it any weight — but what slips and extravagancies are not the greatest men liable to, when passion and prejudice are their bias?

FROM the same spring we may derive another main objection of our adversaries, tho' I think as inconsiderable in itself as the former: it is grounded upon a part of a forecited text*, and on the clause of the words of the Institution, importing it to be a commemoration, *do this in remembrance of me*, &c †? For what would they infer from this injunction? It is certainly a commemoration of CHRIST's death and passion, and the Catholic Church is so far from denying it, that by justly distinguishing between a Sacrifice and a Sacrament, she, in the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, solemnizes a more special memorial of the awful mysteries, and pays a more direct obedience in this respect to CHRIST's ordinance

* 1 COR. ch. II. v. 24.

† LUKE ch. 22. v. 19.

than any of the Sectaries of the Reformation. But what we deny, is, that it is a bare memorial, or only a *figurative* Type of CHRIST's Body ; and aver, on the contrary, that the Real Presence of it in the Eucharist fulfills a commemoration in the truest meaning of the thing. For example, a man in one circumstance of life may represent himself in another : thus a Prince himself commemorates, or, properly speaking, solemnizes his own birth-day. A General can exhibit, in his own person, the memory of a signal victory gained by himself, as was customary in the Roman triumphs ; and St. AUSTIN conceives our blessed Saviour, hanging on the Cross between the good and impenitent thief, as an emblem or type of himself, appearing at the day of general Judgment, with the Just on the right hand and the Reprobate on the left. Now, from all these instances it is evident, that a Commemoration is so far from excluding a Reality, that, on the contrary, it is perfected by it ; and consequently our blessed Lord, in the unbloody Sacrifice of his Body and Blood in the Sacrament of the *Eucharist*, is a more perfect type of himself in the Bloody Sacrifice on mount Calvary, than if he had instituted, in a *figurative* representation of his Body, a meer Commemoration of that dismal tragady.

FALLING upon this hint of a Type, naturally leads me to another proof of the Catholic doctrine. St. PAUL says, that every thing transacted in the old law was only in type and figure,

figure, being fulfilled by CHRIST and evacuated in the law of grace *, and therefore, the institution of the Sacrament of the Eucharist, being one of the most solemn actions of CHRIST's life, (to wit, as I said before, a declaration of his last Will and Testament, and a sacred legacy or pledge of his love to his Apostles and to his Church for ever) he certainly on this occasion, if ever, fulfilled the types and figures signifying this signal token of his love and mercy : And yet, how can this act be reputed a fulfilling these Types, if in fact it was no more than an exchange of them into another Type, or a revival of the old ones ? MELCHISEDECH sacrificed in *bread* and *wine* many ages before, and in this prefigured the Priesthood of CHRIST, who was therefore called a Priest according to the order of MELCHISEDECH ; but if the Institution of the Sacrament of the Eucharist consists of the naked Elements, it can be reputed no more than a continuation of the former Type, or at least, is no evacuation of it ; tho' even in these circumstances it might have had the advantage of a peculiar and special Grace annexed to it. For, the question is not what Grace our blessed Lord might, in his bounty, have allotted to the Sacrament as a meer Type and Figure of his sacred Body, but whether he did institute it in this manner ?

* 1 COR. ch. 10. v. 6, 11.

My former arguments, from plain evidences of Scripture, particularly from the words of the Institution itself, have tended to prove the negative of this question; and the ancient types and figures of it, I conceive to be an additional confirmation, in as much as every pure resemblance or representative is essentially different from its original, or the thing represented. And, in short, it cannot be otherwise understood, as I just hinted, how the types and figures of the old law are evacuated in the new, and fulfilled in CHRIST.

BUT howsoever just these inferences may appear to us, and are so in themselves, our adversaries may look on them with a different eye, and still deem them to be arbitrary. We are a party, and as such may not by them be allowed to be a judge in our own cause. But I must observe, that the same plea holds stronger and with more equity on our side against the Reformers, and therefore concludes, what we have proved in a former controversy, the apparent necessity of a supreme Judge in dogmatical matters: such a one we have, of CHRIST's own appointment, *viz*, the Church, inspired, directed and guided into all truth by the hidden but infallible illumination of the HOLY GHOST.

BUT, for argument's sake, waving at present this prerogative of the Church, we will put the point in debate to a reference; and where, more justly, than to antiquity, the pure age of the Church? That is, to the primitive Fathers, who must be supposed to be best acquainted with the

the Church's tenets and faith, as having derived them immediatly from the source itself, CHRIST and his Apostles ; and must certainly be admitted to be the most unexceptionable interpreters of their doctrine.

FOR brevity's sake (Scripture alone being the direct appeal agreed to in this controversy, and the Fathers only called in as creditable evidences or vouchers to the truth of the Catholic Interpretation) I'll content myself with producing a few of these unexceptionable witnesses, since what appears to be their opinion must be reputed to be the doctrine of the whole Church in her purest age, and what ought to be submitted to in all after times.

SECTION II.

The article of the Real Presence, and Transubstantiation confirmed from the general sense of antiquity, or the unanimous testimonies of the primitive Fathers.

IN having recourse to the primitive Fathers, St. IGNATIUS the Martyr claims a place at the head of the list, who was a cotemporary with the Apostles themselves, their *eleve* and disciple, and consequently cannot be supposed to be ignorant of the apostolick Doctrine. Now this holy Martyr, in his genuine epistle to the Church of Smyrna, has these remarkable words, (quoted also by THEODORET) concerning some

obscure Hereticks of his own time: "They
 " don't," says he, " admit Eucharists, because
 " they don't confess that the Eucharist is the Flesh of
 " our Saviour JESUS CHRIST, which suffered
 " for our Sins, and which the Father raised
 " again by his bounty *."

ST. JUSTIN MARTYR, who lived in the same
 age, and was one of the first writers of the
 Church, in his apology for the Christians to the
 Gentile Emperors, addresses them, on the sub-
 ject of the Eucharist, as follows: " As our
 " Saviour JESUS CHRIST was himself, by the
 " word made flesh, and took for our sake both
 " Flesh and Blood, so we are taught that in
 " the same manner this food, over which thanks
 " have been given by the prayers of his own
 " words, by which our Flesh and Blood are
 " nourished, is the Flesh and Blood of the same
 " incarnate JESUS."

ST. IRENÆUS, bishop of Lions, who lived
 in the second Century, affirms that our bodies
 will rise again, *because they are nourished with the
 Body and Blood of our Lord †.*

ST. CYPRIAN Serm. in *cæna dom.* says,
 " The bread which our Lord gave to his Dis-
 " ciples, being changed not in shape, but in nature,
 " by the omnipotency of the word is made Flesh, ‡"
 and in many other parts of his works he talks
 the same language.

* THEOD. Dial. 3. † L. 4. con. Hær. c. 34. ‡ ST. CYPR.
 in Ser. in Cæn. Dom.

ST. CYRIL of Hierufalem fpeaks fo plainly the language of the Catholic Church, that is, the doctrine of Transubftantiation, that I cannot forbear giving the reader his sentiments at length: his words are thefe, “ Since then he himfelf
 “ (CHRIST) affirms and fays of the bread *this*
 “ *is my Body*, who fhall henceforwards dare to
 “ doubt of it? And fince he affures us, and fays,
 “ *this is my Blood*, who can diftruff the truth of
 “ it, or fay it is not his Blood? He changed wa-
 “ ter into wine in Cana of Galilea, and does
 “ he deferve to be lefs credited concerning the
 “ change of wine into his Blood? Wherefore
 “ let us receive (thefe things) with a full con-
 “ viction, as *the Body and Blood of CHRIST*:
 “ for, *in the figure of bread is given to you the*
 “ *Body*, and *in the figure of wine is given to you*
 “ *the Blood*. Do not then look on thefe things
 “ as common bread and wine, for as our Lord
 “ has affirmed it, *they are the Body and Blood of*
 “ *CHRIST*. And altho’ your fenfe might fug-
 “ geft to you otherwife, let faith confirm you;
 “ judge not of the things by your tafte, but by
 “ faith affure yourfelf, without the leaft doubt,
 “ that you are honoured with the Body and
 “ Blood of CHRIST; being taught thefe things,
 “ and moft fully affured, that *what appears bread*
 “ *is not bread*, tho’ it feems fo to your tafte, but
 “ *is the Body of CHRIST*, and that *what appears*
 “ *wine is not wine*, tho’ the tafte will have it
 “ fo, but *is the Blood of CHRIST**.”

* ST. CYR. Hejufufal. catech. myftag. 4.

IN consequence to this ancient Father's delivering himself on the point in question, in the manner we have just heard, begging one small and reasonable concession, that he be supposed to have spoken common sense ; I infer, that, whereas he makes a direct comparison between the miraculous change at Cana in Galilea, and the change made by CHRIST in the institution of the adorable Sacrament of the *Eucharist* ; such as one is, such must also the other be. But the first miraculous Change was *certainly* a *real* and *substantial* Change ; as such, is related in the Gospel ; as such, was ever understood ; and if it had not been a substantial Change, would have been no miracle at all : therefore, to make the comparison adequate, and to suppose the good Father, I say, to talk common sense, the second Change must also be *real* and *substantial* ; that is, it must be a Change of the Substances of *bread* and *wine* into the *body* and *blood* of CHRIST ; and how our senses are to give way to Faith, of which the Father makes reiterated demands in this passage, but by such a substantial Change, is equally unintelligible.

BUT then, from this reasonable concession, that this Father spoke sense, and would be understood to mean what he spoke, I infer again, that he must have been a rank Papist in this controverted article ; and I appeal to every candid reader, and impartial judge, whether it is possible for the most sanguine advocate for Transubstantiation to deliver this Doctrine in more clear and explicit terms than he has done.

AND

AND again, as the passage I have produced is extracted from a catechistical and dogmatical Instruction, in this he must be supposed to have declared the genuine Faith of the whole Catholic Church at that time ; or if he had not, it is surprizing that there was not a loud outcry of the other orthodox Fathers, his cotemporaries, raised against him, and this his opinion anathematised, with several other novelties of those days. But the contrary being most certain, I infer, lastly, and conclude from the whole, that this single testimony, so strong and full, is an ample declaration of the Belief of the whole Catholic Church at that early time of day, and therefore I might spare my reader's patience, of running over any more quotations from those ancient and venerable authorities. However, I cannot forbear, *ex abundanti*, to add to the list of these irrefragable vouchers for Transubstantiation two eminent Doctors of each of the Eastern and Western Churches, renowned Champions for, and avowed Pillars of the Catholic Faith.

I BEGIN with St. CHRYSOSTOM, the great light of the oriental Church, who, concerning this substantial change of the Elements of bread and wine into CHRIST's Body and Blood in the holy Eucharist, writes thus, " Let us always
 " believe God, and not contradict him, tho'
 " what he says seems to be repugnant both to
 " our thoughts and our senses—for, *his words*
 " *cannot deceive us, but our senses may be easily*
 " *deceived—he never errs, and these are often*
 " *mistaken.*

"mistaken. Since therefore he says, *this is my*
"Body, let us be fully persuaded of it. How
"many say now, Oh! that I could see him in
"his own shape, or his cloaths, or any thing
"about him; believe me, you see him, you
"touch him, you eat him. You would see his
"cloaths, and he lets you not only see him,
"but also touch him, and eat him, and receive
*"him within you *."* Now if words are to be
 understood in their natural meaning, I dare be
 confident that none can more clearly express
 the Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation than
 the above quotation from this learned Father and
 Doctor of the Church; and his sentiments are
 uniform and equally explicit, on this head, in
 numerous other parts of his works; as where
 he says, "that what is in the chalice is the
 "same that flowed from CHRIST's side—
 "this same Body, lying in the manger, the
 "Sages adored, but you don't see it in the man-
 "ger, *but on the altar †.*" And in another
 place, as it were in rapture and extasy, at
 the consideration of the ineffable mercy con-
 ferred upon us in the Institution of this a-
 dorable Sacrament, he cries out, "Oh mi-
 "racle! Oh the goodness of God! He that
 "sitteth above with his Father, in that very
 "instant (of Consecration) he is held in the
 "hands of every one ‡," that is, in the hands
 of the Priests.

* CHRYS. Hom. 83, in St. MATT. † CHRYS.
 Hom. 24. in 1 ad cor. ‡ Lib. 3, de sacerd. c. 4.

St. GREGORY NYSSEN, another light of the Oriental Church, living in the fourth century, and something the senior of St. CHRYSOSTOM, having premised that *we receive the immortal Body of CHRIST into our bowels—that tho' received by thousands of people, it is intire in each and every part* (of the consecrated Elements) —he concludes, that as bread was changed into CHRIST'S Body, during his mortal sojourning on earth, by nourishment, so *now it is changed into the Body of CHRIST, not by nourishing it, but* (being sanctified by the word of God and by Prayer) *is suddenly changed into it by these words, 'THIS IS MY BODY,' the Nature of these things that appear being transelemented into it by the power of Consecration *.*

St. AMBROSE, one of the Pillars and Doctors of the Latin Church, in his book *de Initiatis*, conformably to the sentiments and doctrine of these Greek Fathers, avers, that *bread and wine* are supernaturally changed into the *Body of CHRIST, the same which was born of the Virgin, and into his Blood*, which he proves to be possible, from the several miraculous changes recorded in the Old Testament, as of MOSES'S rod converted into a serpent—the rivers of Egypt turned into blood, and, by the prayer of MOSES, returning back to their own nature—the seas opening a passage—the stream of the river Jor-

* GREG. NYSS. orat. Catech. c. 37. T. 3. Edit. Paris.
An 1638.

dan returning back ; and, lastly, of *iron*, by the command of ELIZHA, contrary to its natural inclination, *swimming on the surface of the water* : from all which wonders and astonishing changes and operations, he concludes thus, “ We see, therefore, *says he*, that Grace is “ stronger than Nature. Now, if a man’s “ blessing could change the course of Na- “ ture, what do we think of the Divine Con- “ secration itself, in which the very words “ of our Saviour operate ? for, the Sa- “ crament which you receive is made by “ the words of CHRIST. And, if ELIJAH’S “ words were able to draw fire from Heaven, “ *will not CHRIST’S words be able to change the species of the Elements ?* We read of all “ creatures in the world, *he said, and they were made ; he commanded, and they were cre- ated* : is not then the word of CHRIST, “ which could give a being to that which “ had none, *able to change those things which are, into what they were not before ?* For, “ it is not less to give new natures to things “ than to change their natures”. This holy Doctor lastly concludes his argument with a corroborative proof from the mystery of the Incarnation——“ Was our Lord, *says he*, na- “ turally born ? ’tis clear he was born of a “ Virgin, above the laws of Nature ; and “ *this Body, which we consecrate, was born of the Virgin.* Why then do we seek for the or- “ der

“der of Nature in the Body of CHRIST, who
“was born of a Virgin, contrary to it*?

To omit many other passages from this holy Doctor's learned writings, to the same effect as what we have now quoted, and to pass by the uncontestable proof of the Real Presence, and of Transubstantiation, from the author *de Sacramentis*, supposed to be St. AMBROSE, or a cotemporary; I beg leave only to draw two consequences from what we have already cited, allowed to be undoubtedly his—first, That either, when he talked the language we have just heard, he believed the article of Transubstantiation and a Real Presence of CHRIST's Body in the Eucharist, or we must suppose him to be a meer trifler in his way of arguing, and to have drawn inferences not only unworthy of himself, but nonsensical and ridiculous; for, in the supposition of his holding a meer *figurative* Presence, and no *real* Change of the Elements, his argument, and the arguments of the rest of the learned Fathers, who, like him, reason from the aforecited examples, must stand thus—MOSES changed his rod *really* and *substantially* into a serpent—he changed water into *real* Blood, &c. &c. The other servants of God operated the like *real* and miraculous changes—God, by his omnipotent word, produced *real* and *substantial* Beings out of nothing, therefore CHRIST, by the same

* St. AMER. Lib. de Initiatis.

omnipotent word, changed Bread into his Body ; *not really and substantially*, but merely *figuratively*, instituting it as a *bare type and sign of his sacred body*. Now if this is not trifling nonsense, unworthy of the great Men whom it is imposed upon, *nonsense*, from henceforward may be reputed *sense* ; *black* be called *white*, and every thing be named by its contrary. Yet it is certain that our adversaries must put all this trifling stuff, and flat, barefaced contradictions into the mouths of these eminent Doctors of the Church, if they pretend to challenge them as advocates for their Symbolical System.

Also in the same supposition, St. AMBROSE'S last argument, drawn from the Incarnation, to prove the superior power of grace over nature, evidently falls to the ground, and is destitute both of sense and meaning, and the allusion quite impertinent. For, what extraordinary power of Grace can we see or imagine in the bare Institution of a sign? That is, in bread, remaining bread, to be the sign or figure of CHRIST'S Body? And what resemblance would it have, in this sense, with the prevailing power of Grace over Nature, exemplified in the mystery of the Incarnation? Certainly none at all.

If therefore, in order to clear these eminent men from the imputation of talking such nonsense, and to make them consistent with themselves, we must, on the contrary, admit them to be avowed patrons and abettors of the Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation ; it follows from
thence,

thence, as a direct and immediate consequence, that the same was the unanimous opinion and belief of St. AUSTIN, St. HIEROM, and other lights of the Church, who were their cotemporaries and in communion with them; and was, therefore, the universal Faith of the Catholic Church till the end of the fourth century.

IT follows also, from the said premises, that any obscure passages culled out of the works of these venerable monuments of antiquity, or any scraps of sentences disjointed from the context to favour the opposite opinion, must be deemed insufficient to over-rule, or even to ballance their other clear and positive assertions of the Catholic faith: for, in this Case, the Fathers are to be reconciled to themselves by the same rule, by which we reconcile the seeming contradictions in the sacred writings, *viz.* Scripture explained by Scripture—the Fathers by the Fathers; that is, the obscure texts of one and the other, by other texts, clear explicit and more numerous.

THO' the sentiments of St. AMBROSE, in this controversy, so plainly attested above from his own mouth, are a sufficient indication, as I just hinted, of the opinion of his disciple St. AUSTIN, whom he had the happiness to reclaim from error, and therefore must be supposed to have reconciled to the faith he professed himself, in this, and every article of the Catholic Church; yet the credit and single authority of this great man is so justly espoused by the Church, and what our adversaries dare not but revere,

revere, that I cannot omit giving at least an abstract of his professed belief in this principal point of the Catholic doctrine, as they occasionally occur in his writings. They are comprehended under the following heads — first, that CHRIST's body is really present upon the altar, under the sacramental signs — secondly, that we receive it not only with our heart, but also with our mouth — thirdly, that it is actually received even by the unworthy communicant — fourthly, that tho' the species or accidents of bread and wine may, in one respect, be called the signs of CHRIST's Body and Blood, they are the signs *not of a thing absent, but of a thing latent*; or, as couched under those sacramental veils, in the same manner (to use one or two of his own familiar comparisons, adopted since by St. ANSELM) as blood is the sign of a soul, and breath an indication of life*.

THE aforesaid great Doctor, commenting on the 33 Psalm, on these words, *he was carried in his own hands*, observes, directly to our present purpose, that this was literally fulfilled by CHRIST at his last supper, when, taking bread into his hands, he said, *this is my Body*, and delivered it to his Disciples. And in another comment on Psalm 98, he writes thus, "He, CHRIST, took Flesh of the Flesh of MARY, and because in this Flesh he conversed, *he*

* St. AUG. lib. conf. ch. 13. Id. c. 2 cont. adv. legis & Prophetarum. ch. 9. Id. Ser. 11. de verb Dom c. 11. & alibi.

" gave

“ gave us also the same Flesh to eat, for our
 “ Salvation. Now there is no Body that eateth
 “ of this Flesh, but first adores it. And we
 “ not only don’t sin in adoring it, but we sin if
 “ we don’t adore it *.”

Now, if saying that under the Sacramental veils is contained the identical Flesh of CHRIST, which he took of his Virgin mother, and declaring it the object of our adoration, is not asserting the Catholic doctrine of the Real Presence, I cannot conceive any words plain and significant enough to express it ; and those we have just quoted must be supposed to be divested of their proper and natural import and meaning. This Extract then, with the other hints I have given from this great Doctor’s works, I apprehend to clench effectually the testimonies we have produced from the rest of the holy Fathers, his cotemporaries—is, moreover, an ample declaration of the conformity of his own belief, and a corroborative evidence to the Catholic faith in this material article of it : therefore, with the sentiments of this great man, not to trespass on the patience of my reader, I may close my extracts from these primitive lights of the Church : For, as those I have already produced, shew to a degree of demonstration, that the Doctrine of Transubstantiation was the universal Faith of the Church in its primitive age, at a time it is allowed to have been wholly free from cor-

* St. AUG. in Psal. 98. v. 5.

ruptions, therefore what was orthodox then, must have been so in succeeding ages, and may excuse me the trouble, and my reader, I say, the patience, of tracing any lower this doctrinal point.

FOR brevity's sake, I beg leave, however, to comprize it under one single observation, and within the same to compendiate the sentiments of the whole body of the Catholic teachers, thro' every age of the Church: but as it has been often taken notice of, and thoroughly managed by several other better hands, a transient view of it will answer my present purpose. The observation I would recommend is, briefly, as follows.

THE article of the Real Presence is so seemingly repugnant to human sense, that if it had been a novelty, or an error intruded into the Church, and imposed on the faith of mankind, as our modern Reformers would fain persuade us, it could not have failed of undergoing the Fate which has visibly attended all other considerable changes and innovations in religious matters; viz. of meeting with the warmest opposition; or, at least, we cannot suppose it could have crept in by stealth, and so insensibly into the world, but that the Epoch of this extraordinary event, and the means by which it was brought about, would have been recorded in history, with every circumstance belonging to it.

THUS, a particular account of all Heresies, which ever appeared in the Church, have been transmitted

transmitted to posterity — the authors of them are known — the very date of their rise and fall — the progress they made, and the vigorous opposition they met with, stand upon record. We need not go any further for a proof than the late pretended Reformation itself, relating whereto there is no incident, whether considered in regard to the whole body, or the particular branches of it, but has been minuted down, and entered into the history of these Religious Revolutions.

IN the article of *Transubstantiation*, (barring the adoption of the term, which was introduced for a clearer explanation of the mystery) nothing of this appears: on the contrary, the primitive Fathers, as we have seen, are avowed abettors of it, and thereby are irrefragable witnesses to its being the Faith of the universal Church in their own time, and vouchers to the orthodoxy of it in the subsequent ages; because, as I just observed, what is once orthodox must be always so: and, unless our adversaries are fond of calling to their aid the obscure impugnors of the Real Presence, whom St. IGNATIUS the Martyr hints at in his epistle above cited, and brands with the ignominy of *Innovators* on the same account; their System was never heard of till BERENGARIUS, in the eleventh century, broached his temerarious opinions on this head, which no sooner made their appearance, but were stigmatised and condemned as a novel Doctrine, till then unknown, and a scandal to the Christian world.

IT was upon this event, or soon after, that the term *Transubstantiation* was occasionally adopted by the Church, in opposition to this pernicious error; not by coining a new article of Faith, as our adversaries disingeniously misrepresent it, but by explaining the old one, to wit, as old as Christianity itself, as I have already, and shall further shew.

SUCH is the antiquity of *Transubstantiation*, and such the modern production and rise of the contrary System; an unnatural Child, no sooner begot but disowned and abjured by the parent of it, (BERENGARIUS) who was ashamed of his monstrous offspring. Thus abandoned, it was buried in oblivion till the two last centuries, when, the spirit of Reforming coming into fashion, ZUINGLIUS, CALVIN and the rest of the train of Sacramentarians, revived the *Berengarian* error; in this point reformed on their Patriarch LUTHER, and how roughly they were treated by him for it we have already heard; and, to the indelible scandal of the Reformation, their differences and variations do, and must ever subsist, as long as they continue separated from the Catholic Church, in which Unity of Faith is only to be found.

IN the mean while, to the point I undertook to prove, I beg leave to say, that the fixed Epoch of the Figurative System being of a modern date, and so notoriously known, and the Epoch of *Transubstantiation*, on the contrary, immemorial, is an irrefragable demonstration
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of the Novelty of the one, and the Antiquity and Orthodoxy of the other. In effect, the rise and different states and vicissitudes of the first, is what no one, the least conversant in the history of the late changes in Religion, can be ignorant of. But, of the Catholic tenet, (if litigating about terms is laid aside, and the things themselves become the subject of our debate) we defy our adversaries to trace its origine, or to fix its birth; and therefore, by St. AUSTIN's rule, it can have no other than that of the Church itself, derived from the Apostles, the founders of it, under CHRIST, from whom we have received the whole System of her belief. "When any Doctrine," says this learned Father, "is found generally received in the visible Church, in any age whatsoever, whereof there is no certain author or beginning to be found, then it is sure that such a Doctrine came down from CHRIST and his Apostles*."

FROM all we have hitherto urged in this and the former Section, I draw the following inferences, which I presume to think no less pertinent to our subject than conclusive—first, If possession immemorial can give a prescriptive right, the article of Transubstantiation lays a just claim to it, which derives its birth from the birth of Christianity—secondly, if the testi-

* St. AUG. ch. 4. de Bpt. ch. 6. 24. Item. L. de unit. Eccle. ch. 19.

mony and authority of the primitive Fathers deserve any weight, we flatter ourselves that it falls into our scales, since we have made it appear, that they are unanimously and entirely on our side of the debate—thirdly, if we are to appeal to, and abide by the words of the Institution of this august Sacrament, and by the correlative extracts out of the other parts of the inspired writings, (taken in their literal and obvious sense, exclusive of forced and strained constructions of the texts) we are confident that they are clear for the Catholic Belief — All these I look upon as plain evidences to the Catholic Cause, and therefore none but the like plain evidences, for the opposite side, can be judged of equal weight to ballance them, and nothing less, than demonstration itself, will be sufficient to over-rule our foregoing conclusive proofs. Yet we apprehend that our adversaries arguments fall so far short of these just demands, that, on the contrary, the Catholics have many collateral proofs, connected with the foregoing premises, to strengthen and confirm their belief, and that our adversaries have nothing material to oppose against them; which is what I undertake to make good in the next Section.

SECTION

SECTION III.

The Doctrine of Transubstantiation further evinced from the weakness and insufficiency of the arguments in the opposition.

THE Evangelist St. JOHN, preparing us for his relation of our blessed Lord's last farewell, which he took of his Disciples on the eve of his Passion, says of him, *that whereas he loved his who were in the world, he loved them to the last* * : That is, being a true and constant lover, he sustained this character to the end, by giving the strongest proofs of his inflamed affections at the last interview, when he was just going to be separated from them. For, as our blessed Saviour (being God as well as man) could not be subject to the vicissitudes of human passions, his love was, no doubt, intrinsically the same at all times ; but, according to the diversity of circumstances he happened to be in, it pleased his increased wisdom to vary his external proofs of it, as he judged most conducive to our advantage ; and therefore, upon this last farewell and impending separation, (besides that ineffable, unparalleled proof of his love which he gave the next day in laying down his life for theirs and our sakes) it appears, in the Catholic sense of the Institution of the blessed

* St. JOHN, ch. 13. v. 1.

Sacrament of the holy Eucharist, how he also by this act gave them an anticipated testimony of his inflamed affections, by bequeathing to them his precious Body and Blood, as a perpetual pledge and memorial of his love. *The eternal Father*, says St. JOHN, *loved the world to such a degree as to give for it his only Son**, *viz*, in the mystery of the Incarnation: and the Son, the eternal word, consubstantial to his Father, and therefore uniform in his actions, and unanimous in his affections, repeated, or rather perpetuated, this act of love, in giving himself over again to the world in the Mystery of the holy Eucharist. In this august Sacrament is verified, in reality and truth, (what the royal Prophet ascribed, or rather, applied to the Manna in type and figure) *A memorial of all his wonders, in giving food, viz*, his own Body and Blood, *to those that feared him, and loved him*†. The adorable Sacrament of the *Eucharist* may therefore, in the Catholic sense, be properly called the Sacrament of love — the compendium of all the other mysteries — a recapitulation of his manifold wonders and miracles — a repetition of his unspeakable mercies — and, at once, an exercise of all his divine attributes. The Creation was, indeed, a manifestation of his omnipotency; the Incarnation was an instance and ineffable token of his mercy; but, in the Institution of the Sacrament of the *Holy Eucharist*

* JOHN c. 3. v. 16. † Psal. III. v. 4.

he unites, as it were, these two mysteries in one : for, by changing one substance into another, *bread* and *wine* into his sacred *Body* and *Blood*, he no less displays his omnipotency (as St. AMBROSE, cited in the last Section, justly observes) than by making every thing out of nothing, in the work of the Creation : and he, on this same occasion, renews the Covenant of his mercy, which he had struck up with us at his *Incar-nation*, but, I may say, in some respect in a more astonishing and endearing manner ; for then he was only specifically united to us, in assuming our nature ; here individually, by incorporation.

SUCH, then, being the wonderful efforts of CHRIST's love, mercy and goodness to man, in the Institution of this Sacrament of love, and mystery of propitiation, to reject so great a blessing, by a wilful opiniated disbelief of its existence, argues no less ingratitude than infidelity — A greater indignity cannot be offered to the memory of a friend deceased than to disdain to accept of, or to undervalue his expiring legacy, the token of his friendly affection. And can the conduct of our adversaries be deemed any thing else, in rejecting CHRIST's gracious *Legacy* in the Sacrament of the *Eucharist*, by mistaking it for what he never intended it ; the *reality* of his sacred *Body* for the *figure*, and this in direct contradiction to his express and positive declarations ?

BUT, let us see what is the plea our adversaries make use of to screen themselves from these just imputations. The most fundamental, and what the learnedest of them lay the greatest stress upon, is, The testimony of their Senses, seconded by human Reason, or, the seeming contradiction in the Real Presence, both to one and the other. They think it a wonderful mystery, out of the reach of their senses, and above their comprehension; and therefore adjudge it incredible. This is their capital objection. In a word, the Case, fairly stated, is this — CHRIST, as positively and plainly as words can express, has asserted a change of Bread and Wine into his sacred Body and Blood, saying, **THIS IS MY BODY, &c.** — our adversaries, weighing this declaration in the ballance of human reason, and moreover putting it to the test of their corporal senses, judge the literal meaning of it what actually *is not*, or what even *could not be*: for the bulk of their arguments against this mysterious change directly lead to this conclusion, which, if they would but speak out, is, to say honestly and truly, that they pay a greater deference to these human testimonies than to the divine authority, and that therefore, CHRIST's power, veracity or sincerity (being placed in competition with these evidences) are to be distrusted.

How blasphemous and injurious to Almighty God this Judgment is, the matter itself speaks! For, as we are rational and free Creatures, there
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are two tributes due from us to the great Author of our being ; the first is, the tribute of our Will by love, thanksgiving and adoration—the second is, the subjection of our Understanding, with all its faculties, by *Faith* — In consequence whereof, the most daring and direct insult a man can offer to God is *Atheism* and *Idolatry*. By the first, we absolutely deny or distrust his divine existence—by the second, we give his essence and glory to another. The injury nearest approaching to these, is to discredit what he has revealed. Yet this latter guilt the Reformers cannot be excused from, when they presume to contest the *Real Presence* of CHRIST'S Body and Blood in the Sacrament, in direct contradiction to his positive affirmation of it : in which respect, as their conduct is shocking to pious sense, and injurious to Almighty God, so it is no less unreasonable in itself, and inconsistent with their avowed belief of several other articles of faith, no less difficult and incomprehensible, where they make no scruple of subjecting their Reason to its dictates, as is evident from the instances I will now produce ; and in several other circumstances are equally obliged to acknowledge the deception or mistake of their Senses, as I hope to make appear from the sundry instances I shall appeal to by and by.

FIRST then, with regard to the captivating our understanding in obedience to the dictates of Faith—in the mystery of the Trinity, this
unlimited

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unlimited submission of our reason thereto is indispensable, and the main body of the reformed Churches entirely acquiesce in it—They also read of the wonderful works of the Creation, of all things being made out of nothing, and of themselves, and every Creature, receiving a being, which had none before; and they believe it—They hear, in the sacred writings, of the miraculous changes operated thro' the ministry of the servants of God, as well as by CHRIST himself; *viz*, of *rivers* converted into *blood*—of MOSES's *rod* changed into a *serpent*—of *water* converted into *wine* in Cana of Galilea—and many others of the like nature; and their Faith is not the least staggered at the relation of these extraordinary Events—they hear them, and they being attested by divine Revelation, the written word of God, they readily give their assent to them—but, when they hear, attested from the same divine authority, that CHRIST taking bread into his hands changed it into his sacred Body, saying, *This is my Body*, they affect to be shocked at the literal and only proper meaning of the words—they cannot conceive them to import a Real change of the substance—'tis a hidden mystery to them, and out of the reach of their senses; and therefore they refuse to believe it.

Now, the vanity and incoherency of these evasive excuses we have already heard obviated and fully refuted by St. AMBROSE, in Section II, before cited; which I need not repeat:
but,

but, in consequence to what this great Doctor has urged there, with so much truth and strength of reason, I'll only beg leave to put one or two obvious questions. Is Almighty God's power contracted, or less operative now than it was heretofore? 'Tis what no one can presume to say: therefore, if he could, in the beginning create every thing out of *nothing*, and in process of time could convert *water* into *wine*, and by himself and his ministers did the other miraculous changes just mentioned; he certainly is not less able now to convert *bread* and *wine* into his sacred *Body* and *Blood*; nor is his varacity less to be depended upon now, that he positively declares he has operated this mysterious change, than he is to be believed, by virtue of the same omnipotent word, to have given a being to what was not, when he only spoke the word and they *were made* *; and to have done the other manifold and surprising wonders afterwards. The truth of these changes is unquestionable——admitted as such by our adversaries: the divine power by which they are operated is also undoubtedly extensive, by the will and pleasure of God, to all times and circumstances; and the actual exercise of this power, in the Institution of the Sacrament of the Eucharist, is equally evident, if credit is to be given to CHRIST's plain words which aver the fact, or to the Evangelists who relate it.

* GEN. ch. I.

HOWEVER,

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HOWEVER, our adversaries pretend to discover a material difference betwixt the miraculous changes we have just instanced, and the change in dispute, *viz*, that the former were perceptible to the senses of those who were the witnesses of them, and therefore certain ; the latter imperceptible, and therefore affording grounds for a doubt of it.

THE allegation is true, but the illation entirely sophistical. In answer to it I must observe that the other recited changes were bare miracles ; this a Mystery——those the object of sense, and therefore to be attested by our senses ; this of *Faith*, and therefore to be believed, tho' out of the *ken* of our senses ; since our blessed Lord himself has pronounced those *blessed who believe what they have not seen*. For this is the merit and perfection of Faith—that the object be hid from our senses, and even out of the reach of our comprehension or reason ; and it is not Faith in its full perfection but under these circumstances, according to the Apostle's definition of it—*Faith is the argument of things hoped for, which do not appear* *. And SOLOMON had cautioned us, long before, not to be too prying and inquisitive into the sublime Mysteries——*What is above you, says he, do not enquire into ; in his (Almighty God's) Works, do not be curious : for it is not necessary you should see with your eyes what is hid* †. And this E-

* HEB. ch. II. v. 1. † ECCLESIASTIC. ch. 3.

claircissement of the nature of Faith, and the essential difference subsisting between the sacred Mysteries (which are the proper objects of divine Faith) and Miracles, (which are the immediate objects of our senses) is a direct answer to, and a refutation of a favourite and capital argument of Dr. TILLOTSON, and other sticklers against *Transubstantiation*—to wit, they are pleased to aver, that the very notion of a *Transubstantiation*, in contradiction to our senses, destroys the certainty we have of CHRIST'S Resurrection; and, in consequence thereto, that it overturns our whole Belief, and the grounds of Christianity! which they pretend to prove thus—*The Apostles, say they, had no other assurance of the truth of CHRIST'S Resurrection than the testimony of their senses; but if our senses are under a deception in the Holy Eucharist, they might have been equally deceived in the other circumstances; therefore the truth of the Resurrection may still be a matter of doubt, and the whole sum of Christian Religion, depending upon it, disputable.*

IN answer to this formidable argument, I say, That the reality of CHRIST'S Resurrection, tho' an object of faith to us who were not eye-witnesses of it, was not properly such to them, as *ocular Evidences*; and therefore when some of the Disciples, at the first sight of their Lord and Master, miraculously resuscitated, had a distrust of its being a phantom or spirit they saw, our blessed Saviour disabused them by appealing

ing to the aid of their other sense of feeling ; telling them, *that spirits had not flesh and bones, like him* *. And afterwards, as a conviction to the incredulous THOMAS, who could not be prevailed on to give credit to the attestation of his fellow Apostles concerning the truth of the Mystery, CHRIST, appearing a second time to him, in company with the rest, appealed also to the testimony of this disbelieving Apostle's senses—*Explore*, said he to him, *my wound, and thrust your hand into my side*, &c †. And the reason of our blessed Lord's making use, with them, of these means of conviction was, that, respectively to the Apostles who were to ascertain the truth of CHRIST's Resurrection to their proselytes, it was the object of experimental knowledge, and not properly of Faith.

BUT the institution of the Sacrament of the *Eucharist*, being to them as well as to us entirely a Mystery, CHRIST neither appealed to *their senses* nor to *ours*, as a proof or evidence to the truth of it, but left it wholly as an object of faith. And even in the point of his Resurrection, our blessed Saviour told St. THOMAS that *blessed are they who have not seen and believe* ‡ ; insinuating that the faithful, who in future times would credit this Mystery independently of the testimony of their senses, should merit thereby more than he who refused his

* LUKE ch. 24. v. 39. † JOHN ch. 20. v. 27.

‡ JOHN 20. v. 29.

assent to it upon any other terms but their bare evidence. And even this incredulous Apostle himself, being thus compelled into a confession of his Infidelity in this point, did not affect to say, that *he now believed CHRIST to be really risen*, because the fact was then made visible and evident to him; but he declared his belief of what he did not see, *viz*, of CHRIST's divinity, *confessing him his Lord and his God* *. This manner of reasoning on this particular conduct of ST. THOMAS, St. GREGORY the great makes use of. "It is plain," says he, "that Faith
" *is the argument of things which do not appear,*
" because what appears is not then believed,
" but known to be what it is : why there-
" fore," proceeds this Father, " when the
" Apostle both felt and saw CHRIST, is it
" said to him, *because you see me you believe ;*
" why he saw one thing and believed ano-
" ther, for the divinity could not be seen with
" mortal eyes, and yet, seeing him in human
" Flesh, he confessed him to be God, crying
" out *my Lord and my God* †." So this great Doctor, entirely agreeable to what I just offered my reader upon this passage, obviating and directly refuting the favourite argument of the Archbishop of Canterbury and his associates, *viz*, that the deception of our Senses, in matters of Faith, can be any means

* JOHN ch. 20. v. 28. † St. GREG. Hom. 26.
in JOHN ch. 20.

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of undermining the foundation of Christianity, or of overturning the grounds of our whole belief.

HOWEVER, the Circumstance of the deception of our senses in the holy Eucharist is not destitute of precedents, even from the sacred writings, and therefore the motive of our adversaries incredulity on this head, from the testimony of their Senses, is still insufficient and groundless. Holy writ, I say, furnishes us with numerous examples, which clear up this matter; *viz*, in the several apparitions of the angelical Spirits, delegated by Almighty God to his servants on earth, on fundry errands and messages. For, how did they appear? Not as they were in themselves and in their own nature; since, being pure spirits, they must have been invisible to corporal eyes: they assumed, therefore, a human shape, the proper and natural object of human sense; appeared to be what they were not, but were believed to be what they were. Thus RAPHAEEL, the Archangel, associating himself, by God's command, to TOBY the younger, had the appearance of a young man, seemingly eat, drank, conversed, and performed all the other functions of a human corporal being; as such he was looked upon by TOBY, till, having discovered his angelic nature and his embassy, he was believed and revered for what he was, tho' appearing to be what he was not. The Angels also appearing to the Apostles, and
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to the good women, visiting CHRIST's Sepulchre, affected, in a different manner, their Faith and their senses; seeming to be men, believed to be Angels. The HOLY GHOST, appearing over the Head of our blessed Lord at his baptism, and descending afterwards upon the Apostles on the day of *Pentecost*, had the likeness of a Dove, (a figure, which carries the nearest analogy to that Holy Spirit) but, by it's surprising effects, was believed to be what he was—the Divine Paraclete, which enlightens and inflames every man fitly disposed to be susceptible of his influence—known, I say, by its inward irresistible force, not by any outward characters.

To these instances of the error of sight, I'll add one in which the other senses had a share of deception; this was in regard to the *Manna* miraculously showered down on the Israelites in the desert, which being mercifully bestowed upon them by Almighty God for their food and nourishment, and being visibly the same thing to all, yet varied in its taste, according to the respective appetites and inclinations of the eaters, relishing that, which each one had a fancy for, and conceited it, or wished it to be!

IN short, in all these instances (to omit innumerable others, which are to be gathered from the sacred writings) it is certain, that the external Senses laid under a gross error and mistake. The facts are undoubted, and our adversaries can not contest the truth of them—

why then such a wonder raised at the deception of our Senses in the point in question? Why, upon their bare testimony, is the Reality of CHRIST's presence in the Sacrament of the Eucharist rejected?—when it is proved, from so many undoubted precedents, that our Senses are liable to be deceived—that in those sundry circumstances they have been deceived, and therefore may be again deceived: and, from the very nature and intent of this august Sacrament it was necessary, in this case, that they should be deceived. For, our blessed Lord's design was, as we have already shewn, to communicate himself to us, to incorporate himself with us, and to become our food, for the spiritual nourishment of our Souls; which could not be done in his own natural shape, nor, indeed, in any other than a borrowed shape. And it was fitting, moreover, for a trial and proof of our faith, that his Corporal Presence should be concealed under these veils; since, as I hinted above, it is only thus that it becomes the object of Faith. To *see, feel, hear*, and to *taste*, are the means (tho' fallacious and liable to mistake) of coming to experimental knowledge, and the Test by which it is tried, but cannot be admitted to be the proof of divine Faith; because, on the contrary, by the Apostle's rule, Faith is *the argument of what does not appear**, and CHRIST pronoun-

* HEBR. ch. II. v. I.

ces them blessed who attain to this perfection of it—*Blessed are those who have not seen and believe* *.

THE objections against the Real Presence, from the testimony of the external senses, being so weak and unconvulsive, as we have seen, the *sacramentarians* call in another corps of reserve to their aid; which is, its pretended contradiction to their Reason, grounded on the incomprehensibility and incredibility of *Replication*—How, say they, can the same identical body be replicated and existent at the same time in different places? — If it is asked how we conceive the thing, or it is expected we should clear up the mystery so as to bring it within the reach of our limited comprehension, 'tis what no Catholick ever pretended to do; Mysteries are to be believed, not to be comprehended. If the possibility of *Replication* is urged as a contradiction, we deny it. *To be, and not to be, at the self-same time and place, or, concomitantly to be, and not to be at all,* is certainly a contradiction in nature, and impossible; but *to be in two places at once* is no contradiction: and, tho' above human comprehension, yet possible to the divine power, which can do more than we are able to comprehend; and the actual existence of it is evinced from the following undeniable precedents.

* JOHN ch. 20. v. 29.

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OUR blessed Saviour, ascending in his humanity up to Heaven, is permanently fixed in that state of Glory ; yet he appeared, on earth, to SAUL, in his road to Damascus *—— to St. PETER, flying cowardly from persecution ; and will appear, at the last accounting day of general Judgment, to all mankind in the vale of Josaphat. On these occasions then he is in two places at once——in Heaven and on earth ; and therefore why not in ten thousand, since the multiplication of a miracle can cost his divine power no more than its first perpetration ?

WE read, in the Gospels, that CHRIST multiplied five barley loaves and five fishes to be sufficient for the corporal subsistence of five thousand people ; and, if he has bequeathed his sacred Body and Blood for our spiritual nourishment, is he less able to replicate it for this much more desirable effect ? But, without having recourse to miraculous proofs, there are Mysteries in nature of this kind, which human understanding, and all the wisdom of man is unable to unravel. The surprising encrease from Generation, and the production of thousands of fruit from a single kernel, is what the greatest Philosopher cannot account for ; the fact we know, the manner of it is a Mystery : and, as SOLOMON observed, long ago, man in his inquisitive investigation into the

* Acts Apost. ch. 9.

prodigies of nature, and the operations of the Deity, as author of nature, *vanishes away and is lost in his own thoughts.* Let us therefore not presume to measure the infinite extent of the Divine Power by our limited knowledge, but rather conclude, with the great St. AUGUSTIN, that *Almighty God can do what is above the reach of human understanding to comprehend.*

CHRIST then, being GOD as well as man, could change bread and wine into his sacred Body and Blood——'tis nothing less than blasphemy to doubt of it. His love to us was so excessive as to prompt him to execute what by his omnipotency he was enabled, and, in his wisdom, he judged convenient to do : and he having positively assured us that he has operated this mysterious change, we shall offer an indignity to all his divine attributes —— his power, wisdom, love and veracity, if we take upon us to contest the truth of it.

LET, therefore, our Reformers cry out that 'tis an incredible Mystery, that it clashes with their Reason, and contradicts their Senses —— let them make this the foundation of their refusing an assent to it : by this conduct they only chime with the incredulous JEWS, who said, before them, (hearing our blessed Saviour's declaration, that he would give them *his Flesh to eat and his Blood to drink*) *that it was a hard saying, who can bear it **.

* St. JOHN ch. 6.

CATHOLICS argue in a different manner. It is certainly a great and stupendous Mystery, beyond human comprehension, and out of the reach of our senses; but yet supported by the oracle of truth, the express words of CHRIST himself; and therefore, in competition with these, we judge the testimony of our Senses ought to be disregarded, and that our understanding should bend with a blind and unlimited submission to the divine authority. CHRIST's declaration is the foundation and bulwark of our faith, and the confutation of their infidelity—His mercy, in the institution of this Sacrament of love, is moreover the support of our hope, and the aggravation of their ingratitude.

AND, indeed, that the stupendousness of this Mystery, and the excess of love our blessed Saviour CHRIST has manifested in the accomplishment of it, should be the grounds for any one's disbelieving it, or a motive for rejecting it, is, in some degree, as incomprehensible to every rational mind, divested of passion and prejudice, as the mystery itself. Yet so it is; a God incarnate opens the whole treasure of his mercy, in order to make a tender of it to man, in the amplest and most effectual manner it was possible to his infinite Power, Wisdom and Goodness, by bequeathing himself to him in the august and ever adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist, and yet our Reformers disdain the gracious legacy, by questioning the truth of it—A conduct which argues no less ingratitude,

gratitude, as I just observed, than infidelity; and which puts our understanding to almost as great a nonplus to divine the cause of it, or to discover any tollerable reasons to justify it, as to fathom the mystery itself of *Transubstantiation*. For, the *Sacramentarians* may alledge, as much as they please, the testimony of their Senses and conviction of Reason; the plea is so evidently vain and groundless, that it is plain their incredulity must flow from some other source.

THE true cause then of their disbelief, I apprehend to be this ; *to wit*, a man, plunged in vice, sensuality and pleasures, is easily influenced to disclaim a mercy which he is fully conscious to himself he has no right nor title to partake of. He first, by a habit of sin, renders himself unworthy of the ineffable blessing, and then doubts of its existence. Vice blinds the understanding and perverts the will ; pride and immorality is ever observed to be the Mother of Heresy. For, tho' prejudice of education, and a want of due information may be a means of retaining those deluded souls in their erroneous belief, who take up with the Religion they profess upon trust, and, as it were by inheritance, without enquiring further into the grounds of it ; yet the causes I have just assigned, certainly gave birth to the error, and were the first establishment of it.

CALVIN, ZUINGLIUS and the herd of
Sacramentarians who first oppugned the Real
k s Presence

Presence were profligate Libertines, before they became Archheretics—their hearts were vitiated before their understanding was brought over to infidelity; or that they, at least, attempted to be open abettors of it—their faith became a sacrifice to their sensual appetites—they decried the use of the Sacrament, then contested the essence of it, supporting a licentious life by an erroneous faith.

THUS these Ringleaders of the pretended Reformation precluded to themselves and their proselytes the participation of the greatest Blessing an infinite, incarnate Wisdom could invent in man's behalf—the most stupendous Miracle an omnipotent Power could operate, and the greatest Mercy an infinite Goodness could bestow!

AND, therefore, how widely they swerve, in this material point as well as others, from the character of Reformers, which they arrogantly assumed, the matter itself sufficiently declares, and every person divested of passion and prejudice, from an impartial view of the foregoing premises, may be a competent judge.

CHAP.



C H A P. IV.

The article of the Sacrament of Penance considered.

TH E Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist (the truth and essence whereof we have discussed and thoroughly proved, in the Catholic sense, in the last controversy) is, according to the Catholic further acceptation of it, (considered with reference to its use, and the benefit it is of to the faithful) called the *Sacrament of the Living*; because it is required that the receiver should be alive to Almighty God, by sanctifying Grace, before he can be judged in a fit disposition to partake of that ineffable blessing; so that, tho', agreeably to the nature of a Sacrament, it is a direct means, instituted by CHRIST, of conveying Grace to our soul, yet it is such not by giving us sanctifying Grace we had not, but by bestowing on us an accumulation of Grace, or an addition to what we had.

THERE are also other Sacraments, which by the Catholic Church are termed the *Sacrament of the Dead*; because they are the merciful means, instituted by CHRIST, of raising us from the death of Sin to the life of Grace.

Of these the Catholic Church looks on the sacrament

Sacrament of Penance, commonly called *Confession*, to be not the least beneficial to us, in our present unhappy condition of forfeited Justice ; and is, moreover, the previous preparatory disposition towards a worthy participation of the holy sacrament of the Eucharist : and therefore in the order of the controversy in hand, and for the importance of the subject, the Nature, Meaning, Use and Benefit of this Sacrament, deserves to come next under our consideration.

The Sacrament of *Penance* is, in its own tendency and signification, so adapted to the exigences of our corrupt nature, that it is a matter of astonishment how it could ever come into the heads of pretenders to a godly Reformation to lay it aside ; and it certainly is incumbent on them to shew uncontestable reasons to justify this extraordinary proceeding.

WHEN the late Dutchess of York, first wife to King JAMES II, justly scrupling on this very point, opened her difficulties to two eminent Prelates of the Church of England, SHELDON and BLANDFORD, Bishops of Canterbury and Worcester ; they undertook to resolve her no otherwise than by candidly owning that *Confession* was undoubtedly a means of Grace of CHRIST's institution ; that they wished so effectual a help to salvation had been retained within the Reformed Churches, and bemoaned so material an omission as the effect of *hurry* and *precipitation*, with which the work of the Reformation was conducted. Now I presume to think
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that this unsatisfactory answer, tho' the best the badness of the cause would admit of, must make the same impressions on every unprejudiced judgment, it did on this virtuous Princess, to convince us that a work, so essentially defective, cannot be thought to be the production of Light ; that is, to be inspired and conducted by the directions of the Holy Ghost.

IN sudden revolutions of State, and alterations of Government, which are the pure work of man, where every thing is oftentimes begun and carried on with hurry and confusion ; blunders and omissions in the new modelling the political constitution are easily accounted for ; but, in an evangelical Reformation, in which the Church is pretended to be brought back, under the directions of Heaven, to its primitive purity, no fundamental slips or omissions can be admitted of, or even imagined ; and therefore this material Error must be imputed to some other cause, which I apprehend to be this—As the Reformers thought fit to reform away, and to discard the essence of the holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, 'tis no wonder that Penance underwent the same fate ; for, when it could be of no further service as a preparation for that august Sacrament, which was one principal use of it, and as it was otherwise entirely disrelishing to our corrupt palates ; pursuant to the drift of the Reformation, (which was, seemingly, to cook up a Religion not the most wholesom and salutary, but

but the most toothsome) this was to be reformed away amongst the other unfavoury articles of the Old Religion.

BUT now, to come more directly to the point, and to the heart of the question, I must premise two or three *postulatums* equally admitted by both sides; I mean, by the sounder part of the Reformation, as well as by Catholics—I say therefore, first, that they are the merits and sufferings of CHRIST alone which radically cancel the guilt of Sin in whatsoever manner or degree of malice it is contracted—that these are the appretiative satisfaction for it to the divine Justice, and are, no doubt, self-sufficient to discharge the whole mass of Sin that has been, will be, or can be committed. This is an article of Faith which no Christian, of whatsoever sect or denomination, will presume to contest.

I say, secondly, that, in the present order of Providence, since the establishment of the Law of Grace, the said merits of CHRIST have not usually their actual effect, but inasmuch as they are applied to us by such particular means or instruments instituted by CHRIST for this desirable purpose.

I say, thirdly, that the Sacraments, so called, are these means of Grace, or the channels thro' which the fruits of CHRIST's merits and sufferings are conveyed to our Soul for the aforesaid end; viz, for the effectual cancelling of Sin, and our reconciliation to the divine Justice

Justice, injured by Sin — As for instance, the Sacrament of *Baptism*, in virtue of CHRIST's institution, applying to us his infinite merits and sufferings, is acknowledged by the generality of the Reformation, as well as Catholics, to wash away the guilt of Original Sin, contracted by our first Parents in Paradise, and from them entailed on us : in which respect *Baptism* is, no doubt, a most providential and singular blessing, in affording us so easy and practicable a remedy to our fundamental disorder, and an effectual release from the Devil's slavery. And whereas the reformed Churches, that is, the more rational of them, are thus far of accord with us in theory and practice; what becomes a subject of astonishment is, that avowing the existence of these means of mercy, they should be so short-sighted as not to see into our further wants ; but that, on the contrary, they should even disclaim the other means of Grace equally adapted to the said wants and exigences of our sinful state !

IN order to explain my meaning, and to set this matter in the clearest light, I must observe that there is a strict analogy between our spiritual infirmities, the disorders of our soul, and every bodily contagion and inveterate disease. These latter, for instance, even when the infection, by the medicinal power, is removed, leave frequently behind them fatal symptoms, and a bad habit of body, subjecting us to the danger of relapses, which, as often

as they return, we have an occasion for their remedy to be repeated : In like manner our soul is not so cleansed from the infection of Original Sin, in the lavatory of Baptism, but that the dreggs and effects of it lurk behind, called the *fuel of Sin*, pregnant of innumerable other disorders, and which, without a peculiar circumspection on our own side, and the extraordinary Grace of God to prevent them, or his gracious remedies to cure them, must bring us inevitably to our spiritual death and ruin.

Now can we believe that the alseeing providence of God, who is so watchful over us and tender of our welfare that a hair of our head does not fall without his knowledge and permission, who constantly proportions his helps to our indigences——can we believe, I say, that he would abandon us in these necessitous circumstances, in these times of distress ? Could the eternal Word, who debased himself so far as to assume our human nature and to suffer an opprobrious death in order to cancel Sin——to stem the current of man's iniquities——to provide us with means to keep out of the clutches of our spiritual enemy ; or being unhappily hampered in them, to supply us with his aid to extricate ourselves out of them——could this merciful Saviour leave imperfect an undertaking so becoming his goodness, so glorious to himself and so beneficial to us ?——Could this loving physician, who had prescribed

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bed us so prompt and effectual a remedy to a disorder not personally our own, but only entailed on us by inheritance, omit to provide one for those of our own contracting, which being more grievous on our side, and more frequent, we have a greater exigency of his special and effectual relief? No, this is not credible, it was not suitable to his providence, his love and mercy. Let the Reformers get themselves clear as they can of these inconsistencies, and of the just reproach of being injurious to a divine, infinitely benign Providence, by presuming to charge upon it its want to us in these emergent necessities, and to dare to contest the existence of the most conspicuous and beneficial means of mercy he could confer upon us.

THE Catholic Church, on the contrary, is positive that our bountiful Saviour, not more our Redeemer in paying off a full, redundant ransom for our sins, than a tender and provident physician in prescribing a remedy as an antidote and cure to the evil, has effectually given us as easy and prompt a remedy as we could wish for, in the *sacrament of Penance*, commonly called *Confession*; not by its becoming an encouragement to sin, in emboldening us in the repetition of it, as our adversaries unjustly misrepresent it; but as an obvious, practical means to rise out of that deplorable state, by virtue of the Keys or Patents of remission of sins, delivered by CHRIST to his Church; and as a

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powerful preservative against a relapse, in consequence to the essential dispositions prerequisite to a good and valid Confession. In this sense the Catholic Church recommends and inculcates the use of it to her children—in this sense I undertake to prove it from Scripture, tradition, and antiquity, to be a divine Ordinance ; that is, to be instituted by CHRIST, as our merciful Redeemer and provident physician.

SECTION I.

The institution of the Sacrament of Penance proved from Scripture and Antiquity ; and its benefit to mankind, in his present state, enforced from the nature of the Sacrament and our want of these means of mercy.

OUR blessed Saviour, just before his ascension, having delivered to his disciples their apostolical commission of promulging his name and doctrine to all nations ; to the same patents he also annexed a special and distinctive power of binding and releasing Sin. The tenor of their commission runs thus—“ As
 “ my father sent me, I also send you. When
 “ he had said this he breathed upon them, and
 “ said to them, *receive ye the Holy Ghost—*
 “ *whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven*
 “ *them ; and whose sins you shall retain, they*
 “ *are retained **”.

* St. JOHN ch. 20. v. 21, 22, 23.

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THE distinctive power our blessed Lord here vests them with, of binding and releasing Sins, seems to be the fulfilling of a former promise made to them, or no more than a confirmation of a prior instalment, when some while before his passion he said to them "Amen, I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind on earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth, shall be loosed also in heaven" †.—supposing this last text to imply an *actual* delivery of the Keys, and not a bare promise of a future delivery; in this hypothesis the other text from St. JOHN, being the relation of a fact of a later date, must be understood only to insinuate the extension of this authority to an executive power, when entering on their apostolical charge they are directed to exercise it in this and every other shape.

WHICHSOEVER way we are to distinguish these sacred Extracts, the Institution of the sacrament of Penance, or the power of forgiving Sins, is so expressly given and declared in one or both of them, that, (unless our adversaries in this, as well as other controversial points, had equivalently laid on us the ridiculous task, *actum agere*, of proving what is already plain and evident, as a *shovel* to be a *shovel*, or a *spade* a *spade*) I must be thought to be very idle, in taking upon me to explain the texts which are clear and perspicuous in themselves beyond every gloss and explanation possible: they speak very plainly

† MATT. ch. 18. v. 18,

their own meaning, that is, the meaning which the Church has always understood them to import; *to wit*, the *delivery of the keys* to the Apostles, to whom these speeches were directed, whereby they were vested with an absolute power of *binding* and *releasing* Sins; and, in consequence to their patents, *all* who succeed them in their apostolical charge inherit the same authority; because every ordinance or institution of CHRIST, (as has been observed in a foregoing controversy) which by its natural tendency is calculated for the good of mankind in general, or of the Church in particular, must be judged to remain in full force, as long as the Church has a being, and the same occasion or exigency of the institution subsists: but the universal exigency of this institution, and the general use and benefit resulting from it to mankind, is what we have already hinted at in the beginning of this chapter, and shall have occasion of shewing further by and by.

IN the mean while, the main question is, How this Sacrament was to be brought into practice, in order to be productive of this fruit and advantage to mankind for which it was instituted and designed?—Here is a spiritual tribunal erected by CHRIST, in which the Apostles and their successors are constituted the arbitrators and judges of every thing belonging to that court, that is, are endued with a sovereign jurisdiction over the consciences of all those who should come under their pastoral care, and

a judicial power of releasing and retaining their respective misdemeanors. But how, I say, is this to be put into execution? If we are to resolve this doubt from a similitude of circumstances and causes, which come before temporal tribunals, 'tis evident that it is practicable no other way than by a previous cognisance of the crimes which come under their jurisdiction. Every act of temporal judicature presupposes a knowledge of the cause: in order to be enabled to release, reprieve, or condemn, with any form of justice, 'tis a condition prerequisite, and indispensable, to be apprised of the state of the criminal; and therefore, from the dictates of common sense and the nature of the thing, 'tis manifest that the same conditions and forms of justice are equally indispensably annexed to this spiritual tribunal instituted by CHRIST.

THIS, and no more, is meant and practised by the Catholic Church in the use of this Sacrament of mercy called *Penance*, or *Confession*; where the Penitent is both the criminal, self-accuser, and evidence; the Priest, in virtue of the authority delegated to him by CHRIST, sits as judge, and his sentence is the act of judicature; which is favourable or unfavourable, according to the respective dispositions of the Penitent — It is inconceivable how CHRIST's injunction to the Apostles of binding and releasing Sins could be executed in any other manner, and we have an insinuation from St. JAMES the Apostle, that it was in this form, and in consequence to such

previous informations, that they exercised their judicial power; for, in his Catholic Epistle, he recommends to them *to confess their faults one to another* *; that is, *to the Elders*, whom, just before, he had directed them to call for. In the Acts of the Apostles we are also told, that it was the practice of the Faithful *to confess and shew their deeds* †. I might add, that as the law of Grace was prefigured by the Mosaick law in most essential points, so this divine Institution had also its type in the Levitick law, where it was ordained, That such as were infected with Leprosy (the emblem of a soul in the state of sin) should shew themselves to the Priest ‡.

AFTER these undeniable proofs from the inspired writings, concerning the divine Institution of the Sacrament of Penance, it may be unnecessary to bring a confirmation of it from the unanimous belief and practice of the primitive Ages of the Church. If this was requisite, we could trace it from the Apostles down to the Epoch of the pretended Reformation, and we have as many unexceptionable witnesses of it as there are learned Doctors and Fathers of those respective times. I'll content myself with producing one (from whose testimony there can be no exception) to speak for all the rest; because, by a rule I have

* St. JAM. Ep. ch. 5. v. 16. † Acts, c. 19. v. 18.

‡ Levit. c. 13. v. 14.

laid down in a foregoing Controversy, what were the avowed sentiments of any orthodox Father, conspicuous for his sanctity and learning, in any dogmatical point, which does not appear to have been controverted by his cotemporaries, or recanted by himself, must be reputed to be the unanimous sentiments of the rest of the orthodox Fathers, his said cotemporaries, and to be the belief of the whole Catholic Church both then and before, by a continued succession of Doctrine derived from the Apostles. I said, what appears to be the uncontroverted sentiments of any one orthodox Father must be thus reputed to be the sense of the whole Body of the Church; because tho' 'tis true that St. CYPRIAN, a glorious light and Martyr of the Church, erred in the article of heretical baptism, yet it was, respectively to him, only an error of Judgment, not of Faith; because in his time it was a controverted point undecided by the Church. The same must be said of St. POLYCARP and the Asiatick Church, who were mistaken in the calculation of Easter, (called the *Quartodeciman* error) not fully settled till a long time after, by the first general Council of Nice. But none of these differences appear, in those primitive times, relating to the Institution and use of the Sacrament of *Penance*; and the testimony I have to produce for it is clear, beyond a reply: it is from St. CHRYSOSTOM, the great light of the Oriental Church, who delivers himself on this subject

as follows. " Those who dwell on earth, are
 " enabled to dispense the things of Heaven : to
 " them power is given, which neither Angels
 " nor Archangels enjoy ; for, to these it was
 " never said, *whatsoever you shall bind on earth*
 " *is bound in Heaven, &c.* Earthly Princes
 " have power to cast into Prison, but their
 " power is restrained to bodies only ; where-
 " as the bond we speak of reaches the Soul
 " and Heaven itself, insomuch as what Priests do
 " below, God ratifies above ; and the Lord
 " confirms the sentence of the servant. And
 " what is this but to have all power put into
 " their hands to dispose of Heaven ? *Whose*
 " *Sins you forgive, they are forgiven ; and whose*
 " *Sins you retain they are retained.* What pow-
 " er can be greater than this ? God the Father
 " has given all power of judging to his Son,
 " and the Son has communicated all that same
 " power to Priests — They not only re-
 " generate us, but afterwards have power to
 " *forgive us our Sins**." Thus has this great
 and learned Father asserted the Doctrine of
 Penance, in terms as clear and explicit as
 BELLARMINE, or any other the most zealous
 Champion for Papacy, could have explained it
 at this time of day ; and it being grounded
 on the alledged testimonies of Scripture, the
 words of the institution, they give an uncon-
 testable weight to the Catholic Doctrine.

* St. CHRYS. lib. 3. de Sacerd. c. 5.

FOR this, and the subsequent reasons, I supersede any more extracts from these renowned monuments of antiquity—first, because, I say, this I have produced, connected with the scriptural proofs, I look upon to be conclusive—secondly, because we have already heard two eminent Protestant Prelates declaring *Confession* to be a means of salvation of CHRIST's appointment, wishing it had been retained within the precincts of the Reformation, and imputing the omission to oversight rather than to any deliberate design. Doctor MONTAGUE, Bishop of Norwich, and several other Protestant Divines, chime in substance with the Prelates just mentioned, in asserting the institution and lawfulness of *Confession*, and avowing the advantage resulting from the use of it : and even those who affect to be sticklers against this doctrinal point act their part so weakly, and with such an ill grace, as to do no prejudice to the Catholic cause. The Church of England, in particular, in her order for the visitation of the Sick, earnestly recommends to the infirm party a Confession of his Sins, and seems unwilling he should quit the world unprovided with this spiritual shield of mercy, and salutary help towards making a happy end. *Then, says she, shall the sick man be moved to make a special confession of his sins, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter **.

* Book of Com. Prayer.

IN consequence to the confession thus recommended, the minister is next directed to absolve him : the judicial power, usurped by the minister on this occasion, is the same as what is used by the priests of the Catholic Church ; the form of Absolution equivalently also the same. But how ridiculous and incoherent their conduct is in setting forth this ordinance, must be visible to every one ; since, if a reconciliation is eligible and requisite at any time, and there are means of CHRIST'S appointment for that purpose, the exigency and obligation of it hold in time of health as well as sickness ; or rather, in some degree, seems to bind stronger in the former circumstances ; because 'tis a presumption, as well as a folly, to put off so salutary, I should say so necessary a means of salvation to the last moments, when we may run a risque, by such a delay, of being disabled at that critical hour to discharge a duty of so great importance.

BUT now, in order to frame a just idea of the nature of the Sacrament of Penance, of its great importance to mankind, and the infinite benefit accruing to him from it ; 'tis necessary we should recall to our mind the many fatal circumstances of our present unhappy state, to look back on the source of our misfortune, on the difficulties it has thrown us under in the consequence, and the emergent occasion we have of a speedy and effectual relief—to wit, we are all of us Sinners by inheritance, born slaves
to

to Satan, God's sworn enemy and ours. All flesh, says holy Scripture, is corrupted ; and tho' purged and washed in the lavatory of baptism, yet, as I observed before, some dregs and symptoms of the evil remain behind : the seed of sin is sown in us, and our inclination to it discovers itself with our capacity of committing it, that is, from the first dawns of reason : we no sooner begin to know what is evil, but we find a propension to it ; our Understanding is blinded, our Will perverted, and our Memory filled with innumerable criminal ideas, which continually prompt us to what is offensive in the divine sight, and, in consequence to these innate corruptions interwoven into our nature, we effectually fall into daily and sundry kind of sins.

THIS is a frightful, but true picture of human nature in its present state of forfeited justice : such was the deplorable condition of man when the Lord of Mercy appeared in his behalf, not only as his Mediator and Redeemer, but also as his physician, prescribing for him a sovereign remedy to these epidemic evils, in the institution of the Sacrament of Penance. True it is, what I premised in the beginning of this chapter, that the infinite merits of an Incarnate Deity were self-sufficient to cancel all our iniquities, and to discharge the debt, in full, due to the divine Justice, contracted by Sin ; and we might, no doubt, if God had pleased, have felt the immediate effects of this blessing

bleffing, by a happy reconciliation, independently of every other *medium*. This, I fay, was poffible to Almighty God, but was not agreeable to the fecret difpofitions of his equitable providence. He had created man a free creature, and therefore his fpontaneous concurrence with the divine mercies, to fave himfelf, was made a condition thereto not to be difpenfed with. *He that created you*, fays St. AUGUSTIN, *without you, won't fave you without you* *. The Almighty, therefore, would not intrude his mercies upon us, but left it to our own liberty and option to appropriate them to ourfelves, by laying hold on the means prefcribed us by his benign providence : they were in themfelves a fource of living waters, overflowing and fuperabundant for all ; but yet were to be conveyed to none but thro' the channels of God's appointment. Thefe, indeed, were different at different times.

BEFORE the Myftery of the Incarnation was accomplished, man's juftification was folely annexed to the inward motions of the heart, *viz*, a ftedfaft faith in their future MESSIAS, an intense love of God, and a fincere forrow for Sin, exclusive of any outward means of grace ; but, fince that happy event, CHRIST, as I further obferved above, has graciously vouchsafed to give us certain inftruments to be as an acknowledgment and commemoration of this great Myftery of Mercy, and an application of it to the intent for which it was fulfilled—the

* St. Aug. Conf.

cancelling of Sin, and our happy reconciliation to the divine Justice irritated by Sin.

Now the Sacrament of Penance is more practicably one of these means of Grace and Mercy than most of the rest, inasmuch as it is adapted to the special and extraordinary exigences of our corrupt state, capable of being repeated as often as we may have occasion for it by our unfortunate relapses into sin. We are conceived in Original sin, which being washed away in the lavatory of Baptism, it wants no more cleansing, and therefore we are only once baptised. Our Actual sins are innumerable ; we are daily falling into sundry crimes, and therefore have a free and repeated access to the remedy of them in the Sacrament of Penance, and may depend on receiving the benefit sought for, as often as we partake of it in the manner and dispositions required. *Have you sinned?* says St. CHRYSOSTOM, *repent : have you sinned a thousand times? Repent a thousand times?*

THESE heartening exhortations to relapsing Sinners, are grounded upon the solemn insurances of pardon from Almighty God himself, to Sinners truly repenting, who, by the Prophet EZEKIEL, declares that *He desires not the death of the Sinner, but that he be converted and live* * ; and, by ISAIAH the Prophet, that at whatsoever time the Sinner returns to him with a sincere Re-

* EZEK. C. 33. V. 11.

penance, *tho' his Sins be as red as scarlet, he shall be made as white as driven snow* †. The like promises of mercy, made by our blessed Saviour in the New Testament, are innumerable; which, for brevity's sake, they being known to every one, I forbear inserting here: to my present purpose it may be sufficient to observe, that his intent and design, in instituting the Sacrament of Penance, was to enable us thereby to attain, with more facility, the forgiveness he so graciously tenders to us; and this forgiveness we are sure can never fail to ensue from a right use of this Sacrament of Reconciliation, in the sincere dispositions of a contrite heart; and, therefore, who can be so foolish and blinded to his own interest as to reject so ineffable a blessing? Who, lying under sentence of death, would not have recourse to the Mercy of his Judge, when it is attainable for asking for? What man, being mortally sick, would neglect to call for his Physician, or make flight of his prescription, from which there is not only hopes but an assurance of a perfect cure? How unjust, therefore, are our late Reformers to themselves, how injurious to their divine Physician JESUS CHRIST, in not only rejecting, but in daring to contest the existence of a Remedy so sovereign for all our spiritual Infirmities, as is that he has mercifully provided us with in the Sacrament of Penance? How still more un-

† ISAII, C. I. V. 18.

pardonable they, who with scornful flirts and ralleries explode it as a Priestcraft, and a mere human devise; or misrepresent it as an encouragement to the evil, from which it is so effectual a Relief?

OF this number is Doctor TILLOTSON, more disingenuous than ignorant, and therefore the less excusable, when he is not ashamed of charging upon us, as falsely as it is monstrous, that *any degree of Sorrow* accompanied by the Priest's absolution is admitted by us to be sufficient and effectual to a full remission of our Sins, howsoever grievous *. From the notion of Penance thus falsely stated, he concludes it to be an encouragement to the most inveterate and habituated disorders, and that *a man, abandoned up to his lusts, may give full loose to his passions upon this presumptuous security* †. Thus, I say, the Doctor, according to the Protestant charitable custom, first misrepresents our Doctrine, and then draws his own odious consequences from it. For, if he had consulted the true exposition of this Catholic Tenet, set forth by the council of Trent, which we profess to abide by; or rather, if he could have prevailed on himself to have declared the truth (which he could not be ignorant of) he should have informed his audience, that it is not *any degree of sorrow*, which the Catholic Church is content with, or allows to be sufficient for a sacramental absolu-

* Dr. TILLOTSON, Sermon II.

† *ibid.*

tion, but a sorrow which is *supernatural*, flowing from the love and fear of God, and positively excluding all actual affection to Sin, including a detestation of past transgressions, and a firm purpose of amendment for the future; which sorrow is, comprehensively, the perfectest sorrow, tho' susceptible of different degrees of intensity, and divisible into several orders or qualities, termed *contrition* and *attrition*. And it is evident, from the nature of the Sacrament of Penance, thus truly declared, that it must be productive of the aforesaid fruits, *Repentance* and *Amendment* — add to these essential ingredients and indispensable conditions of a good and valid Confession, the humiliation and confusion unavoidably accompanying it; which cannot fail to be operative of another double advantage to us, with respect to Almighty God and to ourselves; with respect, I say, to God, by being a means of pacifying his irritated Justice.

For, if the Psalmist assures us that *he will not despise a contrite and humble Heart* *, if he had proved the truth of it himself, when, for one *peccavi*, a sincere acknowledgment of his crime, he heard his forgiveness pronounced by the Prophet, and the guilt of his Sin cancelled; how much more will a similar humiliation, but made in obedience to CHRIST's own ordinance and appointment — an humiliation the most

* Ps 50. v. 19.

repugnant

repugnant to nature, and shocking to flesh and blood——of laying open the naked state of our soul to one of our fellow creatures, be a means of obtaining the same mercy ? It must needs, at the same time, prove of infinite service relatively to our own conduct, in being a check upon it, and a warning to us not to commit sin any more, when it is found to be pregnant of so much mischief, *viz*, either unavoidable shame from an humble and sincere Confession, or certain perdition in the default of it. So that, in short, the Sacrament of *Penance*, considered in its full extent respectively to all its constituent parts and essential conditions annexed to it, is so far from being an encouragement, in any degree to Sin, or a means of emboldening the Sinner to repeat his transgressions with more freedom, (as Doctor TILLOTSON above, and others ridiculously object) that, on the contrary, it implies an absolute detestation of past misdemeanours, a present Remedy to the disorders already contracted, and a powerful antidote against a future relapse.

BUT while this charge can, with no colour of reason, be fastened on the Sacrament in question, it is certain, that in the present order of providence, the want of these means of mercy, which is our adversaries case, as they have thereby no check or restraint on themselves against Sin, and are not subject to the shame and confusion of an humble confession of it, when committed, directly lays them under

der the fatality they would make us liable to, of continuing in the state of Sin, and of being exposed to a more evident risque of adding sin to sin, till they have filled up the measure of their Sins; whereby, not being penitent according to the means prescribed by CHRIST, they come to die finally impenitent.

THUS our Reformers, in reforming away and discarding the Sacrament of *Penance* called *Confession*, have reformed away the most effectual help to salvation, and have shut the gates of Mercy against themselves; and whether this has happened by oversight, (as the more moderate part of Protestants affect to palliate this act) or by design, (as the barefaced impugnors of this Sacrament are not ashamed to say; maintaining a bad cause with a worse defence) it no ways redounds to the credit of their pretended Evangelical Work; but, on the contrary, is a visible mark of its being defective in this important point of Faith and means of Salvation; and thereby falls short also on this head, of the merits of their arrogated title.

HAVING closed my discussion of the present point, it may appear unnecessary to detain my reader any longer upon it: but since a learned reverend Prelate, lately, thought proper to attack in particular the Catholic Doctrine of Repentance, tho' what his lordship opposes to it are no more than obsolete prejudices and misrepresentations already recited from Doctor TILLOTSON, and both now, and often before refuted; yet as they may be thought to carry
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some weight, from the bare authority of so great a man taking it into his head to revive them, and, if passed by here unobserved, might, by the ignorant and unwary, be judged unanswerable—therefore, being engaged in the argument, charity calls upon us to disabuse them of their preventions ; and our tenets, on this occasion, being grossly misrepresented, we have a right to do justice to ourselves.

'Tis indeed a subject of astonishment, and not to be accounted for, that tho' the true and genuine Catholic Doctrine of Repentance be to be met with in all our Catechisms, yet that our Protestant brethren, and even their teachers and the learned among them, should be ever so affectedly ignorant as to mistake its meaning, or so unpardonably disingenuous, as to be perpetually and most shamefully misrepresenting it. This is the unfair dealing which we claim a right to complain of, from the Pastoral Letter of the Reverend Prelate, directed to the flock under his charge, and on such an occasion, when (being prompted by extraordinary tokens from Heaven, of the divine wrath hanging over their heads, to exhort them to Repentance for their Sins) it was to be expected that nothing, but sincerity and truth, should have accompanied and given weight to those instructions.

Tho' the letter is in every one's hands, yet I beg leave to give a place here to the particular paragraph relating to the point in question. "There

“ is a great and grievous evil,” says the Bishop, “ among us, which naturally springs from the disorders before mentioned ; I mean the great encrease of Popery in this Kingdom. When men have lost all Principles of Religion, and are lost to all sense of morality, they are prepared to receive any superstition, whenever the decay of health, or the cross accidents of life revive the fears of futurity, which may be stifled, but cannot be extinguished : such persons, not able to digest the wholesome food of repentance, by which their spiritual condition might be gradually mended, greedily swallow the high cordial of Absolution, which, like other cordials, gives some present ease, but works no cure. And, with respect to people of a serious and religious turn of mind, the manifest and almost general contempt, or at least neglect, of the duties of Religion, gives a great advantage to the Emissaries of Rome to impose on their weakness, and to persuade them that they can have no hopes in the Religion of a Church, where Religion itself is hardly to be found.”

GOOD GOD! How many disingenuous insinuations, and unfair misrepresentations, are here crowded into a few Lines? What Reasoning? — I beg leave to say, wholly inconsequent and unworthy of the great Man it comes from : for, first, how little reason his Lordship has to complain

complain of the growth of Popery, I appeal to notoriety of Facts; *to wit*, to the defection of several Catholic Families, which have gone over to them of late years — Whether, indeed, motives of Liberty and Interest had not a greater share in these changes than Conscience, may be modestly questioned; and if so, the Protestant Church has little reason to boast of such Proselytes. In the mean while, it being matter of fact that they have fallen off from us, it must be judged from thence that our strength is not encreased, but considerably weakened.

WHAT his Lordship advances next, that a settled immorality *may stifle, but cannot extinguish the fears of futurity*, (tho' whether so or no, is not material to the Catholic cause) is however, I apprehend, also another mistake; for it is found by daily experience, and is evinced in many dreadful examples in Holy Writ, that an habitual and pertinacious abuse of God's graces is usually punished with a subtraction of his special and extraordinary graces; and that a man's wilfully shutting his eyes to the divine lights, renders him unworthy of these blessings, and in the consequence proves a means of depriving him of them, and of leading him gradually to obdurateness of heart and insensibility. It was the deplorable case of PHARAO, and of several others, instanced in the inspired History — But that, on the other hand, when it may please the Father of light, out

of his great and overflowing mercy and goodness, to *revive* in such prodigal children the *fears of futurity*, and to inspire them with a desire of returning to their duty, either by the favour of inward checks and remorse of conscience at the view of their unhappy State, or by *decay of health*, or *other cross accidents of life*; that these gracious admonitions of their deplorable condition and secret calls to repentance shou'd, I say, prove a means (as his Lordship represents them) of *preparing these unfortunate Sinners to receive any superstition*, is a paradox as unintelligible and shocking to pious ears, as it is in itself injurious to the dispositions of a merciful and bountiful Providence. For, to rise out of the pit of immorality, for to plunge into the gulph of superstition, would be only *escaping out of Scylla*, as the saying is, to *fall into Carybdis*; that is, to exchange a less evil for a greater: and, to suppose this Catastrophe to be the natural consequence of God's special and extraordinary providence, (such as certainly are checks of conscience, salutary fears of God's Judgments, and the rest) what is this less than to accuse divine Providence itself of being defective?

BUT, again, with respect to people of a serious and religious turn of mind, that the evil examples of Corruption and Immorality, among the professors of their own Religion, should be a means of their forfeiting the faith they have been brought up in, and make room for those

of

of a contrary persuasion to *impose on their weakness*, and to make profelites of them to their belief, is another paradox his Lordship advances, irreconcilable to our idea of a divine and benign providence, as well as to reason and common sense.

THE like Examples, indeed, of Libertinism and corruption of Manners, reigning among the members of another Religion, of whose principles we are ignorant, may, no doubt, be a means of alienating our minds from it, and of keeping us at a greater distance ; but with respect to the Religion we have been educated in, and whose tenets of faith and discipline we are perfectly acquainted with, they cannot have the same influence upon us : in this case, such as do not live up to their profession may become to us an occasion of scandal, but cannot prejudice us against the Religion itself, unless, after mature examination, it be found to be destitute of that purity of doctrine and morals fit to prevent such disorders, or be unprovided with helps and remedies to recover or reclaim those out of them, who have been unhappily engaged. And whether this is not really the case of the Reformation, I appeal to every unbiaſſed judgment, from an impartial view of what has been hitherto, and will be hereafter offered to his consideration thro' the course of this Essay.

WHAT the reverend Prelate further opposes directly to the article in question, or rather scornfully flings at it, when he says, *that such persons,*

(habituated sinners) *not able to digest the wholesome food of Repentance, by which their spiritual condition might be gradually mended, greedily swallow the high cordial of Absolution, which, like other cordials, gives some present ease, but works no cure*—This flirt, I say, seems to be more immediately calculated for to fix his flock in their imbibed preventions against this article of the Catholic Faith, than to refute it; and, instead of clearing up the Truth before their eyes, is throwing dust into them to hide it from them. For, *what gradual means of repentance* would his Lordship prescribe, which are not required by the Catholic Church as previous and necessary conditions to a *valid* sacramental Absolution? I suppose that a total conversion of the heart to God from sin, an abjuration and detestation of past sins, and a purpose of amendment for the future, are *these means* which he would, or should, point out: and are not these also required by us as essential ingredients to a sacramental Absolution? Is not Absolution looked upon by us to be *invalid*, or to no effect, without them? Are not there moreover other conditions, annexed to it, repugnant to flesh and blood, which the indulgent Reformers have taken care to lay aside—I mean an undisguised and humble manifestation of our sins, and of the whole state of our souls, to a Priest, to be followed by a satisfaction or a repentance shewing itself in penitential works to be unfeigned and effectual. Oh! how has the spirit of passion and prevention transported this

this great and learned man beyond the bounds of truth, for the sake of blackening us, and placing our cause in the most odious and disadvantageous light !

UNDER the pretext of cautioning his flock against an imaginary evil of suffering the *emissaries of Rome to impose on their weakness*, he imposes on our belief a Monstrous Doctrine no man in his senses ever taught, and no Catholic ever dreamt of ; *to wit, a high cordial of Absolution*, qualified for vitiated stomachs, and destitute of every ingredient to a true repentance ! but, blessed be God, we disavow and abjure the ungenerous and disingenuous charge ; and, as I said in the beginning, our common Catechisms, in every Catholic child's hands, are its full refutation.



CHAP. V.

Concerning the invocation of Saints and Angels.

THE Catholic Church, that is, the Church in communion with the Church of Rome, is allowed, by our adversaries, to be in possession of the fundamental articles of Faith, and all the necessary means to salvation ; she is acknowledged to have the essential constitutives of the Church of CHRIST, and to be

the original Repository of the Credentials and Powers belonging to it ; viz, the *holy Scriptures*, the *Hierarchy*, the *Sacraments*, and the rest.

As large as this concession may seem to be, and, in some degree, a strained compliment coming out of the mouths of enemies, it is no more than what the evidence of truth has extorted from them, and what they have been obliged to make for their own sakes, and in their own defence : for, as they derive their pretensions to the very being of a Church from the Roman Catholic Church, (which they do not disown to be the Mother of all other Christian Churches, or, at least, the Church from which they had their origin) to have disputed her the fundamentals or constitutives of a Church, would have been to un-church her, and, in consequence thereto, to un-church themselves : for, it is as unconceivable how they could receive a being from that which had none herself, that is, how they could be the true Church of CHRIST, springing from an Idolatrous Church, as that the principles of the Gospel can be deduced from the *Alcoran* ; or, that the *Hierarchy*, *Sacraments*, and other Essentials of the Law of Grace, should be conveyed to us thro' the channels of Mahometism.

IN the mean while a plausible plea was to be thought of to justify their revolt from their Mother Church, and for setting up a separate communion.

communion. In order thereto the more moderate abettors of the Reformation have recourse to a middle expedient, which is, to charge her with introducing additions to the primitive faith : and it is in this, or the like manner, they explain their meaning— They pretend that at the time of, and long before, the *Æra* of the Reformation, the Church had fallen, as it were, into her dotage ; in which state she had insensibly been raising an edifice of *straw* and *strubble*, clogged with superficial novelties and superstitions ; so that, tho' her *foundation* continued sound, her *superstructure* was faulty.

BUT how much soever our adversaries may plume themselves upon this plausible plea, on examining it strictly we shall find that it has more of froth and empty conceit in it than solidity ; for it either must prove too much, that is, more than they would mean and is for their purpose, (so that in endeavouring to thrust out one of our eyes they part with two of their own) or it will prove nothing at all. Because, if this supposed superstructure, or additions made to our faith, (call 'em by what name they please) are *nonfundamental*, and they have no other charge to lay against their Mother Church ; then the epithets they fasten on her, on other occasions, of *Idolatrous* and *Anti-christian*, are unjust ; and their separation from her, on account of such supposed innovations, admitted to be immaterial, was groundless, and grievously

grievously criminal ; because it is a sin of Schism, which is ranked by St. PAUL in the list of deadly sins, destructive of salvation : And therefore, if to get clear of this guilt, and our just recrimination upon them, they return to their charge of *fundamental* errors against their Mother Church, they, of course, as I have just shewn, must un-church her, and of consequence un-church themselves.

SUCH are the miserable shifts the Reformers are reduced to, in order to give some colour of justice to their revolt—such the various language they talk at different times to serve a turn, and the flat contradictions their rash attempt, of impeaching the Church of errors, throws them into.

HOWEVER, as they, in the course of this controversy subsisting between us, lead the way, we must be content to follow them all their lengths, doublings and windings, howsoever intricate and out of the road. This condescendence brings me at present to the consideration of the meaning of this *superstructure of faith*, (if it has any meaning at all) which they so loudly charge upon us.

FOR the sake of method and perspicuity I'll exemplify it, at present, in the particular article of the *invocation of Saints and Angels*, at which some of the squeamish Reformers affect to be much scandalised—the most sanguine and violent of them express of it the greatest abhorrence and detestation ; while, as we shall see by

by and by, the moderate, the candid, and many of the most learned of their body, look upon it as an article justifiable in itself, and warranted from the undeniable practice of antiquity.

SUCH are their divisions among themselves in this, as well as most other points controverted between us, scarce unanimous or agreeing in any thing but their inflexible obstinacy in error, and their determined separation from their Mother Church. But while their differences are a kind of negative evidence to the Catholic cause, loud clamours and vulgar prejudices are certainly no arguments against it. Reasons—convincing, undeniable reasons, can only be admitted in the present controverted point, to confront our demonstrative proofs, backed by the prescription of practice immemorial.

THESE reasons, to carry any weight, ought, I apprehend, to be one or all of these three following—first, the divine prohibition of the invocation of Saints, clearly expressed in the Inspired Writings—or, secondly, its being directly derogatory to the honour of Almighty God and the mediatorship of CHRIST—or, lastly, that it is a devotion useless and unprofitable. But, if none of these reasons hold, and the contrary can be evinced from clear Scripture, primitive practice, and reason itself; then, it is hoped, the Saints may still keep possession of their charter, and their memories be as lawfully celebrated in our Churches

Churches, and their aid invoked in our liturgies, as their names are retained in the calendar.

THIS is the justice which, in the following Section, I undertake to do these faithful, beloved, servants of God, our assured friends and undoubted intercessors.

SECTION I.

The Veneration and Invocation of Saints justified by Scripture, the holy Fathers and reason.

TO proceed with regularity and justice in any debate whatsoever, it is always requisite to set the state of the question in a fair and true light : without this necessary precaution we should be beating the air, or fighting in the dark, where friends and enemies run an even risque of falling a victim to the blows. Yet this is the folly (not to give it a worse name) our Reformers are guilty of in the present controversy, while, by misrepresenting our Tenet and impugning it in that false light, they do not properly attack us, but a phantom of their own brain and invention.

THE honour the Catholic Church pays to the Saints and Angels, is set forth by them under the notion of divine worship ; the necessary consequence whereof is, that they must make us idolaters. Now, whether this is to be reputed a part of the *superstructure of our Faith*, in their modish way of expressing it, when they
are

are disposed to be the most merciful to us; or whether it be to be called a *fundamental error*, (and certainly Idolatry can hardly come under a softer denomination) the charge, as coming from the learned part of the Reformation is inexcusable, because they know it to be unjust; whatsoever may be said to extenuate the rashness of the vulgar, in taking up their prejudices without examination, on the word and credit of their Teachers. However, if our cause be to be tried by this Test, *viz*, by what the vulgar think and their Teachers say of us; and our belief is to be understood according to their exposition of it; our condition would certainly be desperate: but we hope to be allowed the privilege, granted to the greatest malefactors, not to be condemn'd unheard. We hope, moreover, it will be reasonably supposed that we know ourselves what we do believe, and what we do not believe.

THESE just *postulatus* being admitted, we, first, absolutely disavow the Doctrine our adversaries would father upon us, that is, we renounce and abjure all *divine Worship* to any Creature whatsoever; and whereas the Church herself is the natural and fittest expositor of her own Faith, and as she has declared it in the present point in debate, by her representatives in the Council of Trent, to this we appeal, and by this we profess to abide. Her exposition of this article is as follows, "That the Saints, who reign with JESUS CHRIST, offer

“ offer up their prayers to God for men ; that
 “ it is good and profitable to invoke them
 “ after an humble manner, and to have re-
 “ course to their prayers, aid and assistance, to
 “ obtain of God his benefits through our Lord
 “ JESUS CHRIST his Son *.” This is the ge-
 nuine belief of the Church in this matter ;
 how different alas ! from the disingenuous and
 malignant exposition of our adversaries ! In
 this sense we doubt not, with God’s assistance,
 to be able to maintain it against their cavils
 and slanders, by uncontested warrants from
 Scripture, primitive practice and reason.

THE first evidence, I shall produce, is out of
 the Apostles Creed, which, tho’ not literally
 a part of the written word of God, yet has
 the sanction of apostolic tradition, and has
 been adopted by the generality of Christian
 Sectaries of most denominations in every age :
 and is, by the way, an irrefragable instance
 that every thing appertaining to Faith is not
 expressly contained in the written Scriptures. Now
 in the ninth Article of this apostolic symbol of
 faith, as every child knows, we assert and
 avow the *communion of Saints* : the obvious
 and genuine meaning whereof we apprehend
 to be, that there is a communication betwixt
 CHRIST’S Church *militant* on earth, and his
 Church *triumphant* in Heaven ; that the said
 communication consists in this, *viz*, that while
 the Saints in Heaven are enjoying the reward

* Conc. Trid. Sess. 25.

of their labours and glorious combats, for their courageous profession and defence of truth here below, they (like MOSES, who lifted up his hands in prayer for the Israelites fighting the battles of the Lord) are offering up their vows and prayers before the throne of Mercy in behalf of their brethren on earth, actually engaged in the field of battle, and in the like combats, in which they came off so happily victorious. And if it is reasonable to believe (as no doubt it is) that these blessed inhabitants of Heaven can and do remember their brethren on earth—if their Charity which (as ST. PAUL assures us, in that state of bliss never ceases) inclines them to do these good offices for us; where can be the incongruity, unreasonable-ness, much less the illicitness of our requesting of them this Charity.

THIS then, is what we apprehend to be the simplest and most genuine meaning of this article of our Symbol, *the Communion of Saints*; this the friendly intercourse subsisting between the Saints and us: we communicating with them by supplicating their interest and intercession in our behalf, to the throne of Mercy: they reciprocally communicating with us by indulging us the benevolence requested of them: one is a consequence of the other. *The Saints can, and are willing to pray or intercede for us; therefore we may lawfully desire their intercession and prayers.*

THO' the explanation I have given of this article of the Creed, I presume to think, quite easy and natural, yet we dare not flatter ourselves that we can clear up any point to such a degree of perspicuity, as to obtain our adversaries implicit assent to it, upon our own bare word. While they are disposed to misrepresent our interpretations as arbitrary, tho' never so plain, and right or wrong to impugn them, it renders it necessary for us to look out for other corroborative evidences. It is our good fortune on the present subject to have one, to which they can make no exception, as to the testimony itself, it being one of their own most credible and eminent writers. The testimony I mean is the learned Mr. THORNDIKE, who, in his *just weight and measures*, respectively to the article of the Creed, I have just discussed, not only agrees with us in his sense of it, but also in the foundation on which it rests. His own words will be the best expositor of his sentiments, which are as follows. "All Members," says he, "of the Church triumphant in Heaven, according to their degree of favour with God, abound also with love to his Church militant on earth : therefore, it is certain, both *that they offer continual prayers to God for its necessities*, and that their prayers must be of great force and effect with God for the assistance of the Church militant, in this warfare ; which, if it be true, the communion of Saints will necessarily
" require,

“ require, first, that all, &c.—secondly, that
 “ *the living beg of God a part and interest in*
 “ *those prayers, which they, who are near to God*
 “ *in his kingdom, tender to him without ceasing*
 “ *for the Church upon earth*.*” Thus this Pro-
 testant author, whose testimony gives at least so
 much weight to our interpretation as to prove it
 not to be arbitrary. I shall have an opportunity
 of producing additional evidences from other
 eminent Protestants, by and by.

IN the mean while it is incumbent on me,
 at present, to shew clear Scripture for the *an-*
tecedent and *consequence* of the position just ad-
 vanced, *viz, that the Saints do pray for us*, and
 that therefore *it is lawful for us to solicit their*
prayers. Out of an abundance of these sacred
 vouchers, which, for brevity's sake I pass over,
 the few following I apprehend to be uncon-
 testable—that *the Saints and Angels incess-*
santly pray for us, is evinced from the follow-
 ing Extracts.

“ THE Angel of the Lord answered and
 “ said, O Lord of Hosts! how long wilt thou
 “ not have mercy on Jerusalem, and on the
 “ cities of Judah, against which thou hast had
 “ indignation these threescore and ten years †.
 “ The four and twenty Elders fell down be-
 “ fore the Lamb, having every one of them
 “ Harps and golden Vials full of odours, *which*
 “ *are the prayers of the Saints* ‡. And another

* c. 16. p. 107.

† ZACH. I. 12.

‡ Rev. 5. v. 8.

“ Angel came and stood at the Altar, having
 “ a golden Censer ; and there was given unto
 “ him much Incense, that he should offer it
 “ *with the prayers of all Saints* upon the gold-
 “ en Altar, which was before the Throne—
 “ and the smoke of the Incense, *with the pray-*
 “ *ers of the Saints*, ascended up before God out
 “ of the Angel’s hand *.

THE Angel RAPHAEL, *discourfing* himself,
 to TOBY, and giving him to understand how
 acceptable his prayers and works of mercy were
 at the Throne of God, said to him, *when you*
poured forth your prayers in tears, and buried
the dead—I presented your prayer to the Lord ||.
 Now, that it is lawful to request their prayers,
 is, as I observed, but a consequence of their
 praying for us, but is, however, further enfor-
 ced from the two following texts out of many
 which I omit.

“ God, before whom my fathers ABRAHAM
 “ and ISAAC did walk ; the God which fed
 “ me all my life long until this day ; the
 “ *Angel, which redeemed me from all evil, blefs*
 “ *the Lads* †. Grace be unto you, and Peace,
 “ from which is, and which was, and which
 “ is to come, and from the seven Spirits which
 “ are before his Throne ‡.

To these Scripture proofs I’ll subjoin one from
 reason itself, the natural result of every one’s
unprejudiced judgment and impartial reflections on

* Rev. c. 8. v. 3. 4. || TOBY, c. 12.

† Gen. c. 48. v. v. 15. 16. ‡ Rev. c. 1. v. 4.

this subject. ST. PAUL made no difficulty of requesting the prayers of his living friends : it was his constant practice, thro' all his Epistles. The members of the Reformation, as well as the Catholic Church, copy after this great Apostle's example, and have adopted his practice into a general custom. Now I'll only ask one plain question—Can it be less lawful to address our friends for their intercession in our behalf when they are in the state of bliss, where their charity is more perfect, their interest with Almighty God supposed to be greater, and consequently our presumption of success better grounded, than to solicit this same charity from them while they are in the state of mortality, weak and infirm vessels like ourselves, and subject to all our corruptions ? Or could there be any more incongruity in St. PAUL's requesting the prayers of his congregation, had they been in Heaven, than while they were cohabitants with him in this earthly mansion ? To aver this incongruity is ridiculous ; and therefore the negative must be certain.

I CONCLUDE, from the whole, that the Invocation of Saints is so far from being illicit, or forbid by any divine ordinance, that, on the contrary, it has the sanction of the Creed, is seconded by reason, and is warranted by the undoubted records of Scripture, to render it lawful and even highly commendable. Therefore the impeachment of our adversaries against it on their first plea, of being unlawful, may

be judged, from the premises, to have evidently failed : and we apprehend that their second exception to it, for being derogatory to the divine honour, and injurious to the mediatorship of CHRIST, is not better grounded.

THIS truth is, in fact, but another sequel from the foregoing premises : for, if the invocation of Saints was really inseparable from these dreadful consequences, 'tis inconceivable how it should not come within the list of the divine prohibitions : but from what has been already alledged, and shall be further produced presently, it is certain that there are no such prohibitions ; that is, no divine ordinance forbidding it : it is also certain, from the premises, that there are many plain and positive texts asserting its licitness, and recommending its practice : therefore the conclusion flowing from these said premises is equally certain that such a practice cannot be liable to the censure our adversaries would fasten upon it, of being any diminution of the honour due to GOD, or derogatory to the mediatorship of CHRIST.

BUT the very nature of the thing (stating the case in the Catholic sense, not as misrepresented by the Reformers) puts the matter beyond all dispute : for, if the respect given to the Saints is to be interpreted an encroachment on the divine prerogative, it must be such either as it is an honour and veneration paid to their memories, or as it is a supplication to them for their intercession and interest. But it is not

so considered in the first light, because all we profess thereby is only to glorify Almighty God in his Saints, as we glorify him in all his works, and as the three children in the Babylonian furnace * summon all creatures, spiritual and corporal, rational and irrational, and even the inanimate part of the Creation, to declare the praises of their Maker. For, how much more congruous is it to glorify him in the wonderful operations of his Grace ? especially since he has signified to us, by the mouth of the royal Psalmist, that in these he takes the greatest complacency, and would be chiefly admired—*Wonderful, says he, is God in his Saints !* And therefore all the praises we attempt to give to these servants of God, whatsoever respect we presume to pay to their memories, are ultimately referred to God himself, as to the author, cause, and reward of their merit, and are centred in him.

BUT is it not said in Holy Writ—*my glory I will not give to another † ;* and, in another place, *God you shall only adore, and him alone shall you serve ‡ ?* It is so—and the precept we fullfil to the letter, in adoring God alone with divine worship ; respecting the Saints only as his approved servants and bosom friends, and terminating, as I just said, all the honour we attribute to them, in Almighty God. Had we adopted the phantom our adversaries would

* DAN. 3.

† ISAIAH, C. 13. V. 8.

‡ LUKE, 4. V. 8.

father upon us, the charge against us would be just, and our devotions to the Saints damnable—as, on the contrary, we disavow and execrate it, we are consequently out of the reach of this odious indictment.

BUT, to the second part of the objection—are not, say they, our addresses to them, at least, blameable; in begging an aid and assistance which we should expect at the hands of God alone?—Much less: for, in this we do not solicit or respect the Saints as authors of Grace, or bestowers even of any temporal blessing we may be in want of, but barely as Intercessors for them to the Throne of Mercy.

THIS answer is an implicit and sufficient solution to another trivial objection levelled at the same mark, and grounded on the form of Prayer prescribed and left us by our blessed Saviour JESUS CHRIST, which is addressed to the Eternal Father alone, *Our Father who art in Heaven, &c.* and which they are pleased to suppose that we abandon, by making a round-about supplication to the Saints. But to this charge we also plead Not Guilty. The Catholic Church professes the profoundest Reverence for, and singular attachment to this Divine Prayer: she makes use of it continually; and the first lesson children are taught, as soon as they are able in any degree to form their tongues to words, is to lip out the Lord's Prayer. But, as our blessed Saviour, in giving us this particular

cular form of Prayer, personally directed to his eternal Father, has not thereby forbid any other distinctive addresses to the two other divine Persons, which the Reformed Churches occasionally make use of as well as we ; so the Catholic Church judges, very justly, that there is no more reason for interpreting it a forbiddance of a well-ordered application to the Saints, as his approved friends and servants, and our powerful Intercessors.

FROM the first to the last it is evident that the Invocation of Saints can in no respect be looked upon as an encroachment on, or an imminution of the divine honour ; and therefore this material part of our adversaries exception against it failing, the other, importing it to be injurious to CHRIST's mediatorship, must, of course, share the same fate. As a further refutation thereof, I'll only add one single reflection—CHRIST is, no doubt, our sole *Mediator of Redemption*—the Catholic Church ever thankfully acknowledges him as such ; but still looks upon this prerogative of CHRIST as no exclusion to the Saints tenure and privilege, so often repeated and strongly supported, of being our *mediators of intercession* : and as a corroborative proof that she addresses them in this lower capacity, the personal supplication made to them is directed to *God the Father, thro' the Son, in union with the Holy Ghost*—this is the express clause of all the Prayers of the Catholic Church. And thence we justly

infer, that our addressees to the Saints in this manner and form, as bare Intercessors, can be no more incongruous in itself, derogatory to the divine worship, or injurious to CHRIST, than our request would be of the like intercession, or *mediatorship*, if I may so call it, of our friends and companions here on earth ; of whose favour and interest with Almighty God, we cannot have the same certainty which we have of the Saints united to him by the indissoluble bond of everlasting love and friendship.

And yet how agreeable to Almighty God is the intercession even of his servants here on earth—how prevalent with his divine mercy and fruitful of Success, we have numerous proofs out of the sacred Writings. Almost every line of a considerable part of the *Pentateuch* furnishes us with instances of the ascendant interest MOSES, the great leader of the Israelites, had in Heaven ; and of the astonishing efficacy of his prayers—sometimes by producing the most amazing Wonders, in behalf of that People, and of drawing down showers of blessings upon them—at other times by appeasing the divine Wrath provoked against them for their monstrous infidelity, and averting the sword of Justice hanging over their heads. So prevalent was also the interest of the great servant of God, SAMUEL ; so commanding, and, as it were, irresistible his supplications to the Almighty, that he seemingly complained of their tying his hands, and obstructing the execution of
of

of his determined resentment against the unhappy, unfaithful SAUL. *How long, says he, will you lament SAUL, when I have cast him off from being any longer a Ruler over my people of Israel* ?*

I CANNOT omit one particular instance, where the intercession of the just Man is not only declared to be acceptable, but is even recommended and enjoined to the delinquents, by God himself, as the only effectual means of forgiveness. It was in the case of the friends of JOB, whose rash and presumptuous discourses had irritated Almighty GOD to such a degree, that he would not be pacified upon any other terms than thro' the mediation of his faithful servant JOB. "The Lord said to ELIPHAZ "the Temanite, my wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends; for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant JOB hath: therefore take unto you now seven Bullocks, and seven Rams, and go to my servant JOB, and offer up for yourselves a burnt Offering, and my servant JOB shall pray for you; for, him I will accept, lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, like my servant JOB †.

Now, according to the dictates of human reason, the means of obtaining forgiveness should

* Lib. 1. Reg. c. 16. v. 1, † JOB, c. 42. v. 7. 8.

be adapted to the nature of the offence : but the offence, on this occasion, was a direct insult offered to the Deity, by rashly canvassing the dispositions of his divine Providence, and therefore the atonement adequate to the crime one would think should have been self-humiliation, sacrifice, and supplication of pardon, coming directly from the offenders ; yet all these are declared unacceptable and ineffectual, but as seconded by the intercession of his just and faithful servant—*JOB shall pray for you, says Almighty God, and him will I accept.* Therefore it is evident from this, and numerous other instances, that the soliciting the intercession of the Just in our behalf is in itself no ways injurious to God, or derogatory to his honour, and is frequently most conducive towards obtaining the desired effect.

BUT now, can the alteration of their circumstances, from the state of *mortality* to the state of *immortality* and glory, be a means of lessening their interest ? Or shall we even make no difficulty of relying on the prayers of our earthly friends, and look on a request of the intercession of the Saints *as useless and unprofitable* ? This is a paradox irreconcilable to reason and common sense ; and yet it is our adversaries last shift, their third and principal plea, in support of the present opposition, and so insufficient that, I apprehend, a simple view of its weak grounds will be its best refutation.

THESE

THESE grounds must apparently consist of one or all of these following mistaken reasons; *to wit*—first, that the Saints are deaf to our petitions, and regardless of our indigencies—secondly, that they are unable to relieve them; or,—thirdly, and lastly, that they are ignorant of them.

THE first of these allegations offers violence to the Saints characteristic quality, inherent to them in their present state of bliss, their eminent Charity, which, as I observed from St. PAUL before, *never ceases* *; and in Heaven is perfected: and therefore this objection, so injurious to the Saints honour, refutes itself. In a word, it is certain that they love us most intensely; that they are intimately concerned for our welfare, and are desirous and ready to be aiding towards it.

THE second objection is a direct contradiction to the numerous testimonies already produced, of their undoubted interest at the throne of Mercy; and therefore wants no further answer.

THE third objection is trifling and ridiculous in itself, and may be equally disproved from similar undeniable evidences out of the inspired Writings. For instance, CHRIST tells us *that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents* †; which is inconceivable, unless they are made privy

* 1 Cor. c. 13. v. 8.

† LUKE, c. 15. v. 10.

to what is transacting by us here below, and interest themselves in our well-doing. The same is evident from what St. PAUL says, *that we are made a spectacle to the World, to the Angels, and to Men* *.

AGAIN, it is certain that tho' our great Creator, having by his almighty word drawn us out of our original Nothing into the state of Existence, could, if he had had a mind, by his immediate influence and his same omnipotent power, have conducted us thro' every circumstance of our being, independently of any other *medium* ; yet he has been pleased to make use of administering Spirits, the Angels, to guard, protect and direct us in all our paths : therefore I apprehend this to be a token, first, that Almighty God requires of us to repose a trust and confidence in these Guardians and Protectors of our being ; to behave ourselves with respect and reverence in their presence ; to have recourse to them in all our difficulties and dangers, both corporal and spiritual, and to be thankful to them for our preservation in these critical moments. It follows secondly, from this same consideration, that whereas these blessed Spirits must, without all doubt, be intimately acquainted with all that passes within and without us, they can certainly make known our wants and petitions to their associate partners in glory, as often as we may have

* 1 Cor. c. 4. v. 9.

further recourse to them for their concurrent intercession and aid. Infine, if our exigencies and requests, conveyed thro' these channels, that is, by the means of the Saints, to the throne of Mercy, are thus acceptable, as has been proved they are, cannot Almighty God in his omniscient wisdom, by means unnecessary for us to dive into, impart our wants and applications to them, to whom they are directed? The Apostle plainly insinuates this, when he says that *in heaven the Saints know things even as they are known**, that is, in God, as in a mirror in which all things appear as they are. In short, this truth is so self-evident and conspicuous, that a man must shut his eyes not to see it, or have the front to deny first principles, and to withstand demonstration itself, not to submit to its conviction.

THE same degree of evidence, I presume to think, accompanies every proof before alledged, of this Catholic tenet, and consequently overturns their vain opposition against it. At least I dare be positive that it appeared in this light to the whole world, and was the universal belief of the Church till the trade of Reforming came into fashion; and that the plainest truths being reformed away, one after another, the Saints, with the Mother Church which espoused their cause, were sent adrift, and dispossessed of their tenure, which they had held

* 1 Cor. c. 13. v. 12.

from the foundation of Christianity—till these late times of confusion, I say, the honour and veneration due to the Saints and Angels was never doubted of, and their Invocation the general practice ; infomuch that I dare challenge our adversaries to produce one authority in the primitive ages of the Church (not a convicted or a reputed Heretick) against it ; while we have a cloud of these venerable witnesses of antiquity to bring forth in its defence. Out of this great number of them, for brevity's sake, I'll only quote one or two, whose authority is indisputable, and their sentiments express and plain, and therefore to be deemed the sentiments and belief of the whole orthodox Body of the Church.

ST. GREGORY NYSSEN addresses himself to St. THEODORE, Martyr, thus—“ Intercede for your
 “ Country with our common Lord and King
 “ —As a foldier fight for us, as a Martyr
 “ use the liberty of speaking in behalf of your
 “ fellow servants — If there be necessity of
 “ greater supplications, compel the choir of
 “ your brethren martyrs, and with them all
 “ pray—Admonish PETER, excite PAUL and
 “ also JOHN, the divine and beloved Disci-
 “ ple, that they would be solicitous for the
 “ Churches they have planted *.”

ST. CHRYSOSTOM in his Sermon upon the holy Martyrs, DOMNINA, BERENICE, and

* Orat. de St. THEOD. T. 3. p. 585.

PROSDOCE, thus exhorts the people. “ Let
 “ us go to their Tombs, not only on the day
 “ of their feasts, but upon other days also.
 “ Let us beseech them, let us beg of them
 “ to be our protectresses; for their power is
 “ great, not only when living, but also, and
 “ much more, when dead. For now they
 “ bear the marks of CHRIST, and when they
 “ shew these they may obtain all things from
 “ the King *.

ST. AMBROSE asserts, positively, the lawfulness of the Invocation of Saints, in the following words—— “ Our Angel Guardians are
 “ to be invoked—— the Martyrs are to be
 “ invoked, whose patronage we seem to have a
 “ claim to, by possessing their Relicks. *They*
 “ *have power to ask pardon for our Sins, &c.*
 “ Let us not be ashamed *to make use of them*
 “ *as Intercessors for our infirmity*, who knew
 “ the weakness of the body at the same time
 “ that they conquered it †.

ST. AUSTIN says, “ that we do not name
 “ the Martyrs at the holy table, as we do
 “ others who rest in Peace, so as to pray for
 “ Martyrs; but rather that they may pray
 “ for us, &c. ‡ In another place he says,
 “ ’tis the practice of the Church, which the
 “ faithful know, that when the Martyrs are
 “ named at the Altar, we pray not for them,
 “ tho’ we pray for the other souls departed,

* ST. CHRYS. T. I. p. 62. 51. † ST. AMBR. l. de Vid.

‡ ST. AUG. Tract. 74. in JOHN.

“ whom we name. For it is an injury to a
 “ Martyr to pray for him *to whose prayers we*
 “ *ought to commend ourselves* *.

To these venerable Monuments of Antiquity I might subjoin ORIGINE, THEODORET, and others of less note ; tho’ as they spoke the language of the Church in their times, and were never censured for their opinions on this head, they must be reputed orthodox. I might add, that the innumerable Homilies and Sermons extant, of almost every holy Father, on the Saints Festivals, are so many vouchers to the legality of honouring and invoking them.

I’LL conclude these venerable testimonies with St. JEROM’s answer to VIGILANTIUS, an Heretic of his own time, and reputed such by him in the point in question. “ If the Apostles,” says he, “ and Martyrs, prayed for others in
 “ this world, (when they were in concern
 “ for themselves) how much more after their
 “ crowns, victories, and triumphs ? MOSES
 “ obtained pardon for six hundred thousand
 “ men——STEPHEN begged pardon for his
 “ persecutors ; and since they are with CHRIST
 “ will they have less power” ‡ ? It is to be observed from this short extract from this great Doctor, that his defence of the honour and invocation of the Saints, against his cotemporary

* St. AUG. Serm. 159 de Verb. Apost. ‡ St. HIER.
 Lib. cont. VIGILAN.

antagonist, literally coincides with our foregoing proof of the Catholic Doctrine against our modern Reformers, and rests on the same foundation.

THE frank declaration of some of the most candid of our adversaries, who could not refrain subscribing to this truth so creditably attested, shall supply the omission of the rest of these venerable authorities. MR. THORNDIKE's judgment on this subject I have quoted, at length, above. He further confesses, that "the lights both of the Greek and Latin Churches"—BASIL, NAZIENZEN, NYSSEN, AMBROSE, JEROM, AUSTIN, CHRYSOSTOM, both CYRILS, THEODORET, FULGENTIUS, St. GREGORY the Great, LEO—More, or rather All, after that time, have spoken to the Saints, and desired their assistance *.

IN another place he says, "that to dispute whether we are bound to *honour* the Saints or not, were to dispute whether we are to be Christians—and, whether this be *religious* or *civil*, nothing but the equivocation of words makes disputable; and the cause of that equivocation the want of words †.

DR. MONTAGUE, Bishop of Norwich's declaration of his opinion in this point is expressive and entirely Catholic. "I grant," says he, "CHRIST is not wronged in his Media-

* THORN. Epil. part 3. p. 358. † *ibid.* p. 353.

“ tion ; it is no impiety to say as they
 “ (the Roman Catholics) do—— *holy MARY,*
 “ *pray for me ; holy PETER, pray for me.*

And again, “ I see no absurdity in nature, no
 “ incongruity unto analogy of faith, no re-
 “ pugnance at all to sacred Scripture ; much
 “ less impiety, for any man to say *holy An-*
 “ *gel Guardian pray for me* †.

AND the Bishop of Oxford, in his edition
 of St. CYPRIAN, says, “ we do not doubt
 “ but the souls in Heaven pray earnestly to
 “ God that he may shew his Mercy to those
 “ that live here †.

From these large concessions, coming out of
 the mouths of our adversaries now cited, to
 omit many others, I beg leave to draw this
 obvious conclusion, *viz*, that the force of truth
 must be great indeed, when it has obliged our
 enemies to subscribe to it. And, in the mean
 while, their frank confession is sufficient to
 give shame to the rest of their Brethren, who
 still perversely withhold against the same evi-
 dence and conviction, whilst it, at the same
 time, sinks the credit of the Reformation in
 general, which amongst the rest of its teme-
 rarious proceedings, and manifest inconsistencies,
 is guilty of robbing the Saints and Angels of
 an honour undoubtedly their due ; and is in-

† Tract. *Invoc. of Saints*, p. 118. ‡ p. 271.

jurious to its own Members, by depriving them of the benefit of so powerful and effectual a patronage.



C H A P. VI.

The Honour of the blessed Virgin MARY asserted, and an extraordinary Veneration proved to be her Right.

WHATSOEVER honour is admitted to be lawfully given to the Saints and Angels, as servants and friends of God, must, by parity of reason, be allowed in an eminent degree to be the blessed Virgin MARY's unquestionable right, as Mother of God, and the Queen of all Saints. On this foundation the Catholic Church has always professed a distinguished and extraordinary Devotion to this cherished Favourite of Heaven, which it is far from me, or any true son of the Church, to dissemble. On the other hand, the Authors and Abettors of the Reformation, as much to their shame, have been as active and industrious in depreciating her memory. 'Tis true they gloss over this particular conduct as they have done their whole pretended Reform, with the usual cant of impeaching our excesses and abuses; and both

both one and the other, as we shall see presently, without the least colour of justice or reason.

WHAT has been already urged in the foregoing chapter, in defence of the Saints honour and their invocation, may be reputed an implicit vindication of the blessed Virgin's cause. But while our adversaries affect such a distinguished spleen against the Queen of Heaven, (under whatsoever cloak they endeavour to disguise it) it behoves every Catholic to appear, at least, equally zealous in her defence. This consideration has induced me to employ a separate chapter on this subject, and apologizes for the rashness of my undertaking, in becoming an advocate in a cause which wants none at all, or deserves one better qualified for the task, than I dare flatter myself to be.

It happens in this debate, no less than in those which have gone before, to be prerequisite to place the state of the question in a true light, in order to be able to proceed in the discussion of it with any regularity, perspicuity or justice; and as a necessary precaution against the cavils of our adversaries, generally running on groundless suppositions, or willful misrepresentations. The following *notanda* I propose to answer this purpose.

NOT. I. In whatsoever degree of pre-eminence the Church considers the blessed Virgin, as placed above the other Saints and Angels, she still looks upon Her no more than as a pure Creature,

Creature, and consequently at an infinite distance from Almighty God, and also from the Word Incarnate, JESUS CHRIST; who, tho' according to his human nature he be a Creature, yet in virtue of the *hypostatical union* subsisting under the *divine personality*, is God as well as Man, and therefore, not a pure Creature.

NOR. 2. As all acts of Religion are qualified by the objects in which they are terminated, and the intention directing them, we declare that all those which are referred to the blessed Virgin, whether by way of *honour*, or by way of *supplication*, to be *specifically* distinct from what are made to the Blessed Trinity, or to JESUS CHRIST; that is, that they are infinitely wide of Divine Worship. And, whereas words, and even actions, are *signa ad placitum*, that is, arbitrary signs, determined to their meaning by our will and pleasure, or by general usage; we therefore further protest that any words made use of in our devotions to the blessed Virgin, which may be liable to an equivocal sense, to be understood and meant by us, according to the restrictions herein expressed.

NOR. 3. All addresses, of every sort, made to the blessed Virgin are, *in genere*, that is, in kind, and their own nature, the same as those made to the other Saints and Angels; to wit, as barely to an *Intercessor* for us to God, and not as the *Author* or *Bestower* of any gifts, either spiritual or temporal.

THIS is the true tendency of the Honour we give the blessed Virgin——this the genuine belief and sense of the Catholic Church in this point ; tho' I am sensible 'tis not what the ignorant part of our Adversaries mistake it, or what the learned Body of them disingenuously misrepresent it. But, be this as it will, their calumnies can neither affect us, nor our cause. They are the Catholic tenets, which it is incumbent on us to defend, not their misrepresentations : therefore, consequently to these *notanda*, what I undertake to prove in the present debate, is,

FIRST——That the superior prerogatives and privileges the blessed Virgin is possessed of (being clearly expressed in Scripture) entitle her to a superior and distinctive degree of honour from what is given to any other Creature ; but still, as I said above, *in eodem genere* ; that is, as to a pure Creature.

SECONDLY——That these prerogatives justify the distinguished devotion and extraordinary veneration which the Catholic Church (within the limitations and restrictions aforesaid) pays to her memory ; and, moreover, render the Trust she reposes in her intercession entirely Rational, Prudential and Regular.

To make good these assertions is the subject of the two following Sections.

SECTION I.

The blessed Virgin MARY has undoubtedly been privileged by Heaven with extraordinary prerogatives, clearly expressed in Scripture, which entitle her to extraordinary honours.

THE seeming reservedness of the inspired Penmen in their commemoration of the blessed Virgin, (her name but seldom occurring in the course of their writings) has been one handle her adversaries fondly lay hold of to depreciate her memory ; namely, Mr. LESLEY, in his *Case Stated*, displays the whole strength of his eloquence to give weight to this groundless exception to the blessed Virgin's honour ; which, when they have made the most of it, amounts to no more than a bare negative : and even in this light how little to the purpose will be apparent to every one who impartially considers the drift and several designs of these sacred Records. Each one, 'tis well known, has his respective Theme, in which the blessed Virgin was no ways concerned ; for instance, the business of the Evangelists was to assert the divinity of their blessed Master—to prove him to have been the MESSIAS, so often promised to, and long expected by the Jews—the Saviour of the world ; and to give the history of his *Life, Doctrine, Miracles, Death and Resurrection*, which ascer-

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tained to us his divine Prerogative, beyond all doubt or contradiction.

THE drift of the Epistles was to recapitulate and confirm the Gospel Truths, and to give us a system of Christian Morality.

THE Acts of the Apostles consist of two principal designs or divisions—the first setting forth the Apostles, their confirmation in Grace by the mysterious descent of the Holy Ghost, and their installation and entrance on their Ministry, with other incidents thereto relating—the second is a professed history of St. PAUL, his miraculous conversion, his extraordinary call to the Apostleship, and his faithful discharge of his trust, by which he became so instrumental to the establishment and propagation of the infant Church of CHRIST.

Now the blessed Virgin, as has been said, and must be obvious to every one, being entirely unconcerned in the related several designs of these sacred Records; a digression to her from them would have been as impertinent, as it would be, to shoulder in a narration of the exploits of ALEXANDER the Great, into the Annals of Great Britain.

IN that part of the evangelical story where we are informed of the accomplishment of the mystery of the Incarnation, to which, by the will and decree of Almighty God, the Blessed Virgin was so materially instrumental; she is mentioned in so ample and honourable a manner, as to give us the most exalted idea of her sublime

sublime privileges and prerogatives, and to lay the foundation of all that honour, respect and reverence, becoming due to her, that can possibly be given to any pure creature.

THESE prerogatives are of two sorts ; the first *radical*, the other *accessory*—the first clearly and positively expressed in the sacred Writings—the others partly expressed, partly insinuated ; and, from our own sense and reason, to be adjudged to be absolutely subsequent to the former.

HER prerogative of the first kind is what must immediately occur to every one who sets any estimate upon the benefit of his Redemption ; *to wit*, her election to the Maternity ; that is, her being chosen to be Mother of a GOD made Man. This instantly imprints on our mind such an elevated idea of her dignity, that the great Light and Doctor of the Church, ST. AUSTIN, declares he wanted words to express it—*With what praises, says he, to extol you, Oh ! sacred Virgin, I know not ; since you have been deemed worthy to bear in your womb, whom the Heavens are unable to contain.*

IN effect, to frame a true judgment of the dignity of the Mother, it is necessary to dive into the incomprehensible attributes and intrinsic worth of the Son ; and therefore, in this respect, that is, *relatively* speaking, ST. THOMAS of Aquin does not stick to say that the dignity, the blessed Virgin was raised to, on this occasion, was the extent of the divine power ;

power ; because, as the Son was superior to every one else, his Mother, as such, was without her Equal. For, if even, according to worldly estimation, advantages of birth, fortune, and antiquity of family, (which are merits purely relative) bespeak respect—if the meanest creature imaginable, being raised to the honour of a partnership of the royal bed, and becoming Mother of an heir apparent to the Crown, is ennobled and Royalised by such an alliance, and her original meanness thereby obliterated ; what opinion must we entertain of the blessed Virgin, who became Spouse of the Holy Ghost, and Mother of a God Incarnate ?

A cursory view of the sacred History of her elevation to the Maternity, will give us the justest idea of her intrinsic merit and excellencies. This is faithfully set forth in the plain and unornamented account, the Evangelist gives of her Annunciation or Salutation, which, otherwise, may be called an Embassy to her from the Court of Heaven ; and certainly the most surprizing that ever was heard of, and mysterious in every circumstance ; to wit, an Angel delegated from the Creator to a Creature, from the blessed Trinity to a poor Maid dwelling in a contemptible cottage in Nazareth. Thus the Evangelist relates this astonishing event—*The Angel GABRIEL, says he, was sent by God into a City of Galilee, called Nazareth,*

*Nazareth, to a Virgin—and the Virgin's name was MARY *.*

THE subject of the Embassy was as unprecedented and as astonishing as the embassy itself, viz, to solicit her espousals with the *Holy Ghost*, in order to the accomplishment of the great Mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God. *The Holy Ghost*, says the Evangelist, *shall come upon thee, and the power of the most high shall overshadow thee †.*

Now, could the Deity on his side stoop lower, or a Creature be possibly exalted to a higher pinnacle of honour? The dignity of the one rises by the humiliation of the other. But the manner in which this celestial Envoy opened his Embassy, is another circumstance of surprize, and reflecting still more honour to the blessed Virgin. This was his salutation—*Hail ! full of Grace, our Lord is with thee ; blessed art thou amongst Women ‡.*

Full of Grace, indeed—— for, whether we consider the extraordinary gifts, on the part of Heaven, infused into her, to qualify her for her sublime station, or the eminent virtues she exercised on her side in the accomplishment of the decreed Mystery, it must be said that nothing less than a plenitude of Grace possessed her blessed soul. To this plenitude of Grace is to be referred her unparalleled purity, by a special privilege, while she became a Mother,

* LUKE, c. i. v. 26. &c. † *ibid.* ‡ *ibid.*

continuing a Virgin, in which, as St. BERNARD observes, she never was known to have had her precedent before, or her fellow since — *nec primam similem visa est, nec habere sequentem.*

To this plenitude of Grace is to be attributed her blind unlimited obedience to the Divine Decrees; at the same time that she declared the Mystery to be above her comprehension, consenting, without the least hesitation, to be concurring to the accomplishment of it — *Be it unto me,* replied she to the Angel, *according to thy word* *.

FROM the same source, her fulness of Grace, flowed her unprecedented and inimitable Humility, after she had been elevated to the dignity of being Mother of God, styling herself the *Handmaid of her Lord* †.

IF the Evangelist had supplied us with no other informations of her pre-eminent Merits, this single testimony is enough to give us the highest idea of them, and to entitle her to our distinguished respect and veneration: and, on the other hand, effectually stops the mouths of her enemies, who ground their flight of her memory, and affect to justify this conduct, on the pretended reservedness and silence of the inspired Penmen in her regard. For, to have been endued with such a plenitude of Grace as to become entirely agreeable to the Almigh-

* LUKE, c. i. v. 26, &c. † *ibid.*

ty——(and such the celestial Envoy declared her, when, encouraging her to acquiesce, without reserve, to the divine Will, he said, *fear not MARY, for thou hast found favour with GOD*) to be wholly absorbed in GOD, and to have GOD reciprocally united to her, (insinuated by those prior words of the Salutation, *the Lord is with thee*) and taking an intimate complacency in the beauty of her pure soul: these inestimable advantages, I say, convey to us the idea of a Creature the most perfect and excellent that can be imagined; and were the effectual cause that the Angel instantly pronounced her blessed——*blessed art thou amongst women.*

YET these extraordinary ornaments of her soul, we have hitherto enumerated, were only a preparatory disposition to her decreed Espousals with the Holy Ghost——the means to render her a fit receptacle for the Eternal Word to become Incarnate within her chaste bowels; and was, in short, only a prelude to her future sanctity. “From hence,” says St. AUGUSTIN, we gather the blessed Virgins fulness of Grace to enable her to conquer all Sin, because she was to conceive and bring forth him (the Word Incarnate) who was wholly without Sin.” But how great her future Sanctity proved to be, after she had been overshadowed by the divine Spirit——after she was possessed of the source of all Sanctity within her womb——after, by above thirty years

years conversation and intimacy with the Author of all Grace, a continual flow of this celestial dew had penetrated into her soul—what, I say, her eminent Sanctity was, resulting from such singular and accumulated advantages, is not easy to say; nor has the Evangelist explicitly declared; leaving to us to form a conception of it from these auspicious beginnings, and from the nature of the circumstances in which she was concerned. For, if it is said in Scripture that *with the holy we shall be holy*, that is, that, usually speaking, the integrity of our lives, and the rectitude of our manners, is to be gathered from our conversation—canvassing, I say, the blessed Virgin's virtues and merits by this rule, how much do they rise in real value, and ought, proportionably, to rise in our estimation of them, knowing that she conversed, was intimate with, and possessed the Holy of Holies?

PREVIOUSLY to these great advantages, the Angel, as we have already heard, did not doubt to pronounce her *blessed among women*: her Cousin, St. ELIZABETH, divinely inspired, saluted her with the same title; and the blessed Virgin herself, tho' thro' her unparalleled humility, demeaning herself in her own sentiments in proportion to the height of honour she had been raised to by the Almighty, styling herself the *Handmaid of our Lord*, at the very time she was assumed to the title of the Maternity, yet this greatest, and, together, the humblest

humblest of all pure Creatures, enlightened and prompted by the Divine Spirit, also foretells her Prerogative to be the means of perpetuating her name in Benediction to all succeeding Generations. "My Soul," says, she, "magnifies the Lord—because he has deigned to look upon the Humility of his *Handmaid*; for behold! from henceforth all Generations shall call me *Blessed*, because he that is the Mighty has done great things to me *.

THE Catholic Church literally fulfils this prediction as often as she invokes her assistance, or otherwise occasionally mentions her name, by styling her *blessed*, and by paying her all the veneration which is respectively due to that title. And the Abettors of the Reformation, on the other hand, have reason to take shame to themselves, not only for waving, for the most part, both in their familiar Conversations and in their Writings, to give her this epithet, which she lays such an indisputable claim to, but chiefly for catching at every frivolous pretence to discredit her memory. For,

BESIDES the mistaken silence of the Sacred Writers in her regard, already fully refuted, the incidental behaviour of our Blessed Saviour to her, related in the Gospel, at the Marriage in Cana of Gallilee, or on other occasions, (interpreted, by the impugnors of her name, to

LUKE, c. i. v. 46, &c.

carry an air of indifference to her) is brought as another argument for their odious purpose.

Mr. LESLEY, aforecited, industriously also signalizes himself on this head, when he has the confidence to say, (hauling in St. EPIPHANIUS for his voucher, or rather misrepresenting that Father's sentiments to justify his own) "that our Blessed Lord, foreseeing the superstition that would come into the world on account of his Mother, *treated her always at a distance, never once called her Mother*—no not upon the Crois—or by any appellation than that of *Woman*; and, *checking her forwardness,* said unto her *Woman, what have I to do with thee, &c. &c.?*

HERE now are the sentiments of a pious and learned Father (for the most shameful purpose that could be, *viz.* for the sake of depreciating the sacred memory of the Mother of our Redeemer) foully misrepresented, as to the drift and intent of what *he did say*, and words put into his mouth, which *he did not say*. First, as to the drift of this holy Father's discourse, it was not to discountenance a dutiful respect to the Blessed Virgin's memory, (such as the Catholic Church gives her) but to explode a delirious Heresy of the *Collyridians*, a set of doating women of *Thrace*, who took it into their heads to make the Blessed Virgin a *Deity*, and to *worship her with Sacrifice*; whose ridiculous phrensy he refutes, by proving the B. Virgin not to be

be any thing above the *condition* and *nature* of a *Woman*.

THE words of the Father, faithfully rendered, are these—"Wherefore we are also pre-cautioned by the holy Gospel; wherein CHRIST speaks thus, *Woman, what is it to me and to thee? my hour is not yet come* * : "where, for this reason, he called her *Woman* "—left any one should believe the Blessed Virgin to be of some more *excellent nature* than the rest of her sex; giving her, as it were, prophetically, that name, to refute the Heresies and Schisms which he knew would, in after times, happen in the World; and left any one, through an excessive opinion of the most holy Virgin, should be addicted to the *doatage* and *fooleries* of that *Here-*
"sy †.

THESE are the true words of the Father, divested of the odious additions Mr. LESLEY has liberally foisted in, of CHRIST's calling the *Blessed Virgin*, always, *Woman*—never by the tender name of *Mother*—of treating her at a distance, and checking her forwardness; with a string of other spiteful reflections I am ashamed to repeat.

AND tho' the objection, in the whole, carries with it the glaring appearance of the most malignant spleen and prevention, as little becoming a Christian as a Divine, and without the

* JOHN, C. 2 V. 4. † St. EPIPH. 1. 3. T. 4. H. 79.

least foundation of justice ; however, in order to give a further answer to it, which is more than it deserves, I must premise that our blessed Lord is to be considered in a *double capacity* ; to wit, in his *public*, and in his *private* and *filial capacity*. In his *public capacity* he appeared and acted as the *Son of God*, and as the promised *MESSIAS* ; was paving the way for the establishment of his Church, and was wholly attentive to the discharge of the several functions of his divine Mission, which was one motive or end of his being and conversing with us in Human flesh ; and therefore at these times he became All to All, without distinction of Persons, his blessed Mother not excepted. We have an early proof of this system of action, when, at the age of twelve years, being found by his blessed Mother, and reputed Father St. JOSEPH, after three days search, in the Temple ; and they had amorously expressed the uneasiness his absence had laid them under, he made this short answer—That he was taken up in the business of his Eternal Father—*Did you not know*, says he, *that it behoved me to be employ'd in the things belonging to my Father* * ? signifying thereby, that to *this*, every other concern was to give way. His reply, on another occasion, to them that brought him word that his Mother and Brethren were waiting for him without doors—*Whosoever shall*

* LUKE, C. 2. v. 49.

do the will of my Father who is in Heaven, he is my Brother, my Sister, and my Mother †, was an insinuation of the same truth; meaning, that the discharge of his functions, in obedience to the divine decrees, was his present employ, and the sole object of his attention; and therefore, on the occasion of the Marriage feast, his answer to his blessed Mother, minding him of the want of wine—*Woman, what is that to me and thee, my time is not yet come*, cannot be looked upon in any other light but as a bare admonition and remembrance of the same truth, insinuating, I say, that he was acting then in his *superior capacity*, by the immediate influence and direction from above; and therefore that it behoved him to delay the manifestation of his miraculous power, till the time predetermined.

THIS I apprehend to be all that can be gathered from the words, our Blessed Saviour spoke to his blessed Mother on this occasion, and the whole extent of their meaning, exclusive of the least shadow of a disregard to her; at least, I dare be positive that this interpretation is more natural and easy, and much less disrespectful to her memory, than the undecent Reflection Mr. LESLEY, above cited, has not been ashamed to put upon it, of their being *a rebuke and check to the Blessed Virgin's forwardness*. On the contrary, if this passage is

† MATT. C. 12. V. 50.

to be thought in any shape to affect the Blessed Virgin, it was certainly by reflecting greater honour to the Mother, in becoming a token of her powerful interest with the Son; while the first Miracle, under sacred Record, known to be wrought by him, was done at her Intercession, or at least by her motion and suggestion.

IN the mean while, as our blessed Lord's pretended neglect of his Mother, when he was acting in his *public* Capacity, is so justly accounted for; so his superlative respect and regard for Her in his *private* Life, which was from his infancy till he was thirty years old, is equally certain, and must be acknowledged by all hands. The Evangelist declares it in few words, but fully; saying, That *he was subject* *, that is, obedient to 'em; which succinctly comprises the whole sum of filial duty.

I'll close this testimony of our blessed Lord's respect for his Mother, during the long course of his private and hidden Life, with a profession He made of his tender regard for Her on a public occasion, at a time when every word He uttered, particularly demands our attention—ought to be carefully treasured up in our breast, and never to be out of our memory. It must be obvious, to every one, that the instance I hint at is, The endearing remembrance our dying Lord made of his doleful Mother at his expiring moments; when, knowing to what degree her heart was pierced through with the sword of grief, and seeing the inundation of
Affliction

* LUKE, C. 2. V. 51.

Affliction that overwhelmed her blessed Soul, he would seem to forget his own sorrows, in order to relieve hers, by committing her to St. JOHN's care, trust, and protection ; saying to her—*Woman, behold thy Son !* and to the Disciple—*behold thy Mother * !* Thus did he commend the most valuable Treasure he left behind him, *his dearly beloved Mother*, to his *chiefly beloved Disciple*.

Now this instance, I am sure, is no mark of our Blessed Saviour's indifference to his Mother ; but is, on the contrary, an irrefragable proof of his singular regard and concern for her, while he personally distinguishes her from every other ; or, rather, is personally mindful of her when he takes no notice of any one else.

AND this answer I think to be more than sufficient to her enemies shameful objection ; which, indeed, carries with it such a shocking idea, that one may justly wonder how it could ever enter into the mind and imagination of a Christian.

BUT, besides what has been urged through this Section, from reason itself, and the natural obvious result of our own unprejudiced thoughts on the subject, in defence of the B. Virgin's honour, her pre-eminent and singular prerogatives, so uncontestedly asserted, if the Angel GABRIEL is to be relied on, who declares them, or the Evangelist to be credited who records them : these prerogatives, I say, overpoise every negative objection which wit, dissingenuity or malice can devise

P 4

* St. JOHN, c. 19. v. 27.

devise, to extenuate her distinguished Merits; they are an aggravation of the extravagant folly, as well as of the ingratitude of the enemies of her name, in attempting it; and at the same time become the foundation of our inviolable attachment to her memory, and an irrefragable proof that the stedfast confidence the Catholic Church reposes in her powerful Intercession, and the extraordinary devotions she has instituted, and daily addresses to this greatest, holiest, and purest of all pure Creatures, are Prudential and entirely Regular.

SECTION II.

The Prerogatives of the Blessed Virgin, aforesaid, bespeak our singular Veneration of and Attachment to her; and render the extraordinary Confidence we repose in her Intercession, and our Devotions to her, discreet and regular.

THAT we ought to respect every Creature whom Almighty God himself deigns to distinguish with particular tokens of his divine honour and favour, is a truth, I apprehend, evident, from the light of Reason; and which no one will presume to contest. Upon this principle we pay a deference not only to Princes, Magistrates, Masters, and to all in power, but to every one whom Almighty God has placed above us in any superiority of life; either with respect to Birth or Fortune. The great

great ones of this world square their conduct in their political government by this same rule, in requiring a homage to be paid to their favourite Ministers and Servants. In this manner PHARAO honoured the Patriarch JOSEPH; and ASSUERUS rewarded the fidelity of MARDOCHEUS. And it is found, by constant experience, that the most effectual way of gaining access to the Prince, is to make court to a Servant in favour and power; and, on the other hand, a contempt, or slight, of persons placed in superiority, is frequently punished in an exemplar manner, both by God and Man; as is known from numerous instances in the sacred History.

Now, if any one has the front to deny the Blessed Virgin to have been the distinguished favourite of Heaven—to have been singled out, by Almighty God, from the whole race of Mankind, as the object of his extraordinary honour, favour and friendship; towards the ornamenting of whose amiable soul he had opened the whole Treasury of his divine Graces—if any one, I say, will dare to dispute her these Prerogatives, I humbly apprehend that the proofs for them I have produced in the foregoing Section, are sufficient to confute him: and, in the mean while, joining the said premises with my present assertion, *that it is incumbent on us to honour those whom Almighty God deigns to honour*—This being admitted, (which cannot be denied) a respective Venera-

tion of the Blessed Virgin becomes a duty on us not to be dispensed with ; and such our Veneration ought to be, as to keep pace, in some degree, with the honours conferred upon her by the Almighty ; that is, we should endeavour to copy, as near as we are able, the divine Pattern, in paying *her extraordinary respect* whom Almighty God has vouchsafed to distinguish with extraordinary and singular marks of his grace and favour. To swerve a tittle from this conduct, is to censure the conduct of a superior Providence in her regard, and, as it were, to find fault with the distinctions shewn her—the profusion of an inexhaustible treasury, and an almighty, bountiful hand ; which can be nothing less than Blasphemy : and therefore, even a Protestant Prelate, Dr. PEARSON, in his *Exposition of the Creed*, p. 179, could not refrain to avow, *that we cannot bear too reverend a regard to the Mother of our Lord, so long as we give her not that worship which is due unto the Lord himself.*

FROM our aforesaid reasoning, so just and indisputable, I presume to conclude that the neglect and slight the bulk of the Reformers affect to shew to the Mother of God, (not to give it a worse name) is as unwarrantable as we think the peculiar Veneration the Catholic Church pays to her Memory, to be, from the said premises, entirely discreet and rational.

THE first time the Church had occasion of exerting herself with *eclat* and solemnity in defence

fence of the Blessed Virgin's honour, was, in the fifth Century ; when it was invaded by the wicked NESTORIUS contesting the prerogative of her Maternity. This impious *dogma* no sooner made its appearance, but the whole Catholic world took the alarm, expressed their abhorrence of it, (evident marks of its being a Novelty till then unheard of) and anathematised it in the most solemn manner, in Council assembled : The word *Θεοτόκος* was adopted on this occasion, fitted to explain the Faith of the Church beyond ambiguity, and to settle the prerogative of the Blessed Virgin's Maternity out of dispute.

HEAVEN itself seemed visibly to interest itself in the Blessed Virgins cause, and to ratify the sentence the Church had pronounced against this impious Heretick, by inflicting a judgment upon him corresponding to the nature of his guilt : for, as we are credibly informed from Ecclesiastical History, his tongue, which had vomited out his injurious Blasphemies against the Mother of God, rotted in his head, while he was yet alive ; God testifying, by this temporal execution of his justice, how jealous he was of his blessed Mother's honour*.

I do not, indeed, charge upon the generality of our modern Reformers the individual Blasphemy of this Arch-Heretick, so

* BARRONIUS, FLEURY, &c. Hist. Eccles.

exemplarily punished by God, and execrated by every good Christian—and as for those who, at least, tread so nearly in his steps as to profess a manifest disregard to the Blessed Virgin's memory ; since her undoubted prerogatives are not prevalent enough to bring them over to her interest, it cannot be expected that the relation of Prodigies, which they may be inclined to disbelieve, tho' ever so credibly attested, will ever effect it. Therefore my sole drift, in introducing this instance from Ecclesiastical History, is, to shew, by the vigorous resistance the Church made against this avowed Enemy of the Blessed Virgin's name, at that early time of day, how constant its attachment to her has been at all times ; how uniform its sentiments in the Blessed Virgin's regard, and how steady its zeal in asserting her honour on the least appearance of an attempt made upon it.

NOR was this zeal confined to a bare confession, and defence of her Prerogatives ; nor to a speculative, sterile admiration of her Virtues : she has also extended it to a dutiful homage of gratitude, which she never failed to pay to her Memory ; and to a pious confidence in her powerful interest and intercession.

OF the first sort, are those repeated *Antitheses* (with which the writings of the holy Fathers abound) between our Mother EVE, as the cause of our ruin, and the Mother of our Lord, as the happy instrument of our reparation ; with acts
of

of acknowledgment and thanksgiving for this ineffable blessing. The following extracts are a few, out of a great many of that tenor.

ST. IRENEUS says, that “ as EVE, deporting herself refractorily to GOD’s command, became the cause of Death to herself and her posterity ; so MARY, by her respective obsequiousness to the Divine Will, has been the (instrumental) cause of our Salvation—*Causa facta est Salutis* *. Again, she was influenced to be obedient to GOD—thereby MARY, a Virgin, becoming an advocate for EVE, a Virgin ; so that, as human race was brought to ruin by a Virgin, it was saved by a Virgin ; the obedience of one ballancing the disobedience of the other †.

TERTULLIAN, to the same purport, says, that “ as we were lost by the Sex, so we were restored by it—EVE, believing the Serpent, was guilty of Sin ; MARY, giving credit to the Angel GABRIEL, was instrumental to its being cancelled—*Hæc credendo delivit* ‡.

AND, infine, St. EPIPHANIUS, to omit many others, conformably to the sentiments of the Fathers we have recited, says, “ truly, by the blessed Virgin MARY was the world restored to life—EVE brought Death upon us ; MARY brought forth the Source of Life ||.

* St. IREN. lib. 3. c. 33. †. ibid. lib. 5. c. 19.
‡ TERTUL. de Carn. CHRIST. c. 17. || St. EPIPH. Hæc. 78. 318.

I must observe that the expressions these Fathers make use of, in their acknowledgment of their obligations to the Blessed Virgin, rise to such a height of hyperbole, calling her the *cause of our reparation*, and saying that she *cancelled Sin*, (as TERTULLIAN above, literally rendered, expresses himself) as would be received with loud outcries and abhorrence, coming out of a Catholic mouth, at this time of day; and indeed, being taken rigorously to the letter, are false and blasphemous; but as these holy Doctors meant them, and as the Catholic Church always understood them, *to wit*, that she is the *instrumental cause* of our reparation—that she is the *medium* Almighty God made use of to bring about the great Mercy of our Redemption, and the destruction of Sin, were strictly true; because she was the Mother of CHRIST, a God Incarnate, who was the *immediate cause* of our reparation, and who *effectually cancelled the whole guilt and debt of Sin*.

THIS Ecclaireissement, of the Fathers fervorous zeal for the Mother of God, I judged necessary, for their justification and ours; and I may say, in behalf of the Blessed Virgin herself; because we have to deal with adversaries who are fond of depreciating her Memory at any rate, and are ready to cavil at every thing we offer in defence of so good a cause. Having done the B. Virgin and ourselves this justice, I must now beg leave to observe further, that to the bill of debt to the Mother of our Redeemer, for the benefit of our reparation resulting from her in the manner

manner we have now shewn, to which these eminent Doctors and Lights of the Church unanimously subscribed, they have occasionally subjoined repeated professions of their undoubted confidence in her powerful interest, as Intercessor for us to the Throne of Mercy. For my Vouchers I appeal to the following fervent speeches and addresses, made to her by some of the most eminent Doctors and Lights of the Church.

To you have we recourse, O blessed amongst Women! cried out the great ORIGENE, who lived in the infant age of the Church; and had he been guilty of any excess in this point, would certainly have been noted for it by some of the cotemporary Fathers of the Church, as he was for other errors and exotical opinions.

Intercede for us, O Mistress, Lady, Queen and Mother of God, was the affectionate address of the Catholic Champion, St. ATHANASIUS.

I throw myself at your feet, was the ejaculation of St. EPHREM.

Supplicate Almighty God to save our souls! sighed out, in earnest prayer, the great Light of the Oriental Church, St. CHRYSOSTOM.

St. JUSTINA, as St. GREGORY NAZIENSEN informs us, being assaulted by Magical Enchantments had recourse to God, through the Blessed Virgin, beseeching the Virgin, to be assistant to her, a distressed Virgin.

ALL

ALL these short speeches, or ejaculations, plainly declare the entire confidence these virtuous and eminent Lights of the Church reposed in the Blessed Virgin's powerful Interest and Intercession, and were so many earnest supplications to her for it.

To the inflamed aspirations of these Orthodox Fathers of the Church, which discover the intimate sentiments of their Heart, I beg leave to add the testimony of a learned Man of a later date; and tho' in other respects reprovable, yet a creditable witness, in this point, of its being the avowed belief and practice of his Church at that time.

THE testimony I am going to produce, is from a sermon of the learned PHOTIUS, the Schismatick Patriarch of Constantinople, about the ninth Century, delivered upon the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, as follows.
 “ But you, O Blessed Virgin, and also Mother
 “ of the Eternal Word, our propitiation and
 “ refuge—*Interceding* for us with your Son,
 “ and our God; and approaching him as our
 “ *Mediatrice*—*vouchsafe to render us your*
 “ *panegyrist*s, after you have purged us from
 “ all filth and blemish, *fit to be admitted to*
 “ *the celestial nuptials.*”

BUT there can be no stronger testimony to the universal sentiments of the whole body of the Fathers, or rather, of the whole Church, on this head, than the prayer annexed to the angelical Salutation—*Holy MARY, Mother of*
 GOD

GOD, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death—which (if it was not framed by the Fathers, assembled in the Council of Ephesus, in order to assert the blessed Virgin's Prerogative, as from tradition has been constantly supposed) was, at least, adopted by the Church, and in general use, among the whole body of the Faithful, time immemorial before the Epoch of the Reformation.

I CANNOT forbear closing these short Extracts from these learned, good Men, with a passage, at length, from the great St. AUSTIN, whose sole Authority is so justly respected, by the whole Catholic World, as to become little less than a Law; which it would be rashness to contest—whose Orthodoxy was so undoubted, that he was the Oracle of the Church in his own time, and the mouth of the rest of his Cotemporaries. The words of this holy and learned Doctor are very remarkable, as follows. “ Oh blessed amongst Women! who, “ knowing no Man, yet conceived Man in “ your Womb—MARY conceived Man by “ giving credit to the Angel; because EVE “ was the ruin of Man, by listening to the “ illusions of the Serpent. Oh! happy obedience—Oh! surprizing operation of Divine “ Grace. *Blessed Mary!* what sufficient thanks “ can we return to you, who, by your single “ consent, became a seasonable succour to the “ World that had perished—What Praises “ shall

“ shall our frail nature give you? since, by
 “ your communication with the Eternal Word,
 “ you have opened the way to its recovery
 “ from its shipwreckt state. Accept, therefore,
 “ our acts of Thanksgiving, tho’ mean and un-
 “ equal to your Merits; and, when you re-
 “ ceive our Vows, excuse, thro’ your inter-
 “ cession, our failings. Vouchsafe to listen to
 “ our Prayers, and to procure, in return for
 “ them, our happy reconciliation. What we
 “ importunately intrude, thro’ you, on the
 “ Throne of Mercy, may it, thro’ your in-
 “ terest, be excused—What we confidently
 “ request, by you, may it, by your interces-
 “ sion, be obtained. Receive our Offerings—
 “ graciously give what we ask; *because you*
 “ *are the only hopes of Sinners. Thro’ you we*
 “ *trust in the forgiveness of our Sins: on you,*
 “ *O most blessed among Women! is our de-*
 “ *pendance and expectation of our reward.* Holy
 “ MARY! vouchsafe to succour the miserable,
 “ support the faint-hearted, cheer up those
 “ that are in tears, (and affliction) pray for
 “ the People, (the Laity in general) interpose
 “ in behalf of the Clergy, (in particular) in-
 “ tercede for the devout Female Sex—Let
 “ all, who celebrate your sacred Festival, feel
 “ the effects of your seasonable Aid †.

† St. AUG. Serm. 12. de Sanct. in Med.

IN this passage, of this great and holy Doctor, it is to be observed, that he plainly asserts the two Points we undertook to prove; *to wit*, he first establishes, as an uncontestable truth, the Blessed Virgin's transcendant Prerogatives; and, secondly, he lays these down as the foundation of his undoubted trust in her powerful patronage. Whatsoever addresses the Catholic Church makes to the Mother of God, in her Litanies, or any other part of her Liturgy; whether by way of honour or supplication, I dare be positive that they do not rise higher than the nervous and elevated expressions just quoted from this learned and pious Father; which, as they were a declaration of his own genuine sentiments, so they were undoubtedly the unanimous sentiments of the whole Catholic Church. How different, alas! from the avowed sentiments of the modern adversaries of the Blessed Virgin's name!

I WAS acquainted with an eminent Protestant Divine, who was not ashamed to say, *That it would be as well, and as profitable, to pray to his old deceased Mother as to invoke the Virgin MARY.* The indecency of this expression is so shocking in itself, and contemptuous of this cherished Favourite of Heaven, that it is astonishing how any one (who owned her to be Mother of God, and being read in Scriptures, and believing them to be revealed truths, must be convinced from them of the Blessed Virgin's

gin's other additional Prerogatives) could have the assurance to utter it : and yet, tho' perchance there may be few who would be so rash as to talk the same unbecoming language in terms, it is to be feared there are many who, in the main, chime with him in his way of thinking, so disrespectful and injurious to the Blessed Virgin's Memory.

BUT while her enemies entertain ideas so slighting and contemptuous of her, and so prejudicial to themselves, in debarring themselves the benefit of her Patronage ; we, on the contrary, declare, with the holy Fathers just cited, That we bear a stedfast belief of her great power and interest in Heaven, and repose in it an entire confidence. Her personal extraordinary Prerogatives, so often commemorated, plead her power : reason, and self love, prompts us to place our dependance on it. For, if the Saints and Angels, who are only the servants, or bare friends, of God, have an undoubted access to the Throne of Mercy in our behalf, as we have already shewn, who will be so injurious to the Mother of God, as to think that she is kept at a distance from it ? On the contrary, what interest they may have by indulgence, seems to be, as it were, the Blessed Virgins due, in right of her maternity. For, what will not the blessed Trinity grant, at her request towards perfecting our reconciliation with *his* offended justice, who made the first overture to it *himself*, thro' her concurrence,
by

by soliciting her consent to the accomplishment of the Incarnation of the Eternal Word within her chaste bowels?

ST. AUSTIN was so much affected with this weighty consideration, as not to doubt to say, that “by means of this, the Blessed Virgin’s sole consent, the world, being fetter’d in the bondage of sin, received the first glimmering hopes of relief from its slavery. *Quæ singulæ tui assensu mundo succurristi perditæ* *.”

AND, in these sentiments, the holy Doctor only coincides with what St. ELIZABETH told the blessed Virgin, by divine Inspiration; *Blessed thou who hast believed, because the things shall be accomplish’d which were spoken to thee by the Lord* †.

IN the mean while it being so, we cannot imagine that God can deny this Creature any thing at her request, whom, from the beginning, he distinguished by such remarkable tokens of his favour—and, again, she who was made worthy to have the Word Incarnate obsequious to her beck here upon earth, He having been subject and obedient to her, as the Evangelist assures us; what interest may not she be supposed to have with him, now that he is seated on the right hand of his Eternal Father, in his throne of glory and majesty, swaying the Sceptre of power and universal command over

* ST. AUST. Serm. 18. de Sanctis. † LUKE C. I. V. 43.

Heaven and Earth?—*To me is given all power in Heaven and Earth* *.

If her will and inclination to serve us is the point in question, her eminent Charity, transcending that of the Cherubims and Seraphims, and the whole choir of celestial Spirits, ascertain it beyond all dispute, and prove these benevolent dispositions inherent to her in a superior degree: therefore the Church, copying after St. AUSTIN and other holy Fathers, does not think she exceeds in styling her *the refuge of sinners and Mother of grace and mercy*; not by supposing her the author of these Gifts, (as I observed above in the third *notandum* of this chapter) but by having, thro' her unbounded charity, a prompt will and inclination to request them for us, and as *Mother of CHRIST*, who is the source of grace and mercy, having an undoubted interest with him to obtain what she requests. In this single title of *Mother of God*, as has been shewn, all other titles are included and centered; and therefore the confidence we place in her, relying on this foundation, becomes rational and prudential. In short, every proof urged in the last chapter, in justification of the Invocation of Saints and Angels, enforces, in a stronger manner, the reasonableness and licitness of our addresses to the Blessed Virgin; because, as her Prerogatives are so far superior to those of every other Saint and

* MATT. ch. 18. v. 18.

Angel,

Angel, her Interest and charity rise in proportion: And therefore the position then settled (*that the Saints can serve us—that they have a will to serve us; and that therefore it is lawful to request their service*) is still more conclusive in the Blessed Virgin's regard.

Our adversaries, when they are no longer able to withstand these undeniable consequences, attempt to elude the force of them, by having recourse to their old threadbare shift, of charging on us excesses and abuses in the devotions instituted by the Church, and daily practiced either in honour of the Blessed Virgin's memory, or by way of impetration of her powerful intercession. What they would mean is, indeed, hard to say; but, if any thing, it must amount to this—that these devotions are reprobable either in their nature and intent, or in the frequency and repetition of them. But the *notanda* we premised in the beginning of this chapter, effectually obviate and refute this objection under the first notion; while, from these aforesaid premises, it is evident that we look on the Blessed Virgin in the sphere and condition of a pure Creature, infinitely distant from God: our devotions and petitions are directed to her as to a bare Intercessor for us, and have not the least tendency of Divine Worship. I say, therefore, under these limitations and restrictions they can-

not

not be reputed illicit, or reprobable in themselves, and their own nature.

THE objection under the second consideration is equally groundless, and even ridiculous; because what is in itself lawful, cannot, by a repetition of it, become unlawful; and therefore if addressing the Blessed Virgin by one act of devotion or prayer directed to her, is lawful and regular, by addressing her ten times in the same manner we only so many times repeat the same lawful act.

As often as we approach straight to the Throne of Mercy, by a prayer immediately directed to God himself, as in the *Lord's Prayer*, we exercise an act of Adoration, Humiliation, and dependance on God, as the source and bestower of all Blessings, spiritual and temporal; and, when we address him thro' the Blessed Virgin, we do not thereby pay him less these divine Tributes, which are his peculiar due as the Author of our being; nor do we presume to withdraw our immediate dependance on his Goodness and Mercy: but we only subjoin an additional relative honour, by glorifying him in the Blessed Virgin, in consequence to the previous marks of honour and distinction, He himself had conferred upon her. And, lastly, being conscious of our own unworthiness, and justly distrustful of the success of our own prayers, we invoke the Blessed Virgin's power, merits, and mediate intercession to come to our aid: so that, in short, our
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having recourse to the Blessed Virgin does not extenuate our fundamental dependance on Almighty God, but rather heightens our trust in him, thro' the Blessed Virgin's powerful mediation. To Almighty God we say, *Lord, have mercy on us; Christ, have mercy on us*—To the Blessed Virgin, as to the rest of the Saints, *pray for us; intercede for us*—Almighty God we beg to give us his divine Grace—the Blessed Virgin, and the Saints, we desire to *request* it for us. And how agreeable to Almighty God is the mediation of the Just, we have had a proof in the case of the friends of Job, where it was enjoined by Almighty God himself, and accepted of preferably to their own Prayers, Humiliation and Sacrifice. How much, then, more agreeable, and likely to prevail, the interest and intercession of the Mother of God? And, if so, why may it not be lawfully coveted and requested?

THE last objection, of any weight, deserving to come under our notice, and which, if it was supported by the least colour of Justice and Truth, ought, no doubt, to take place, is, that our distinguished zeal for the Mother is an encroachment on the honour and prerogative of the Son, as our mediator between his Eternal Father and us. But, besides that this weak and groundless indictment has been, several times, over-ruled in the course of this Controversy—besides that the specific difference,

ence, settled in the preliminaries to this Controversy, between the *mediation of Redemption* and pure *Intercession*, refutes this charge at once, and evinces, to a demonstration, that the interest of the Blessed Virgin no ways interferes with the Satisfactory Merits of CHRIST; I beg leave to add, *ex abundanti*, that our singular attachment to the Blessed Virgin, and the devotions the Catholic Church has instituted in her honour, or for the sake of supplicating her intercession, have a quite different tendency in their own nature from what our adversaries misrepresent them; and I presume to think, that, on the other hand, their avowed flight of the Mother is generally followed by a neglect of the Son, tho' disguised under an affected jealousy of, and a pretended zeal for his honour.

THE whole sum of our Duty to CHRIST, I apprehend to consist in these three substantial points, *viz, in believing in him—in trusting in his Merits—and obeying his Precepts*. Now, first, that our attachment to the Blessed Virgin is no ways destructive of, or prejudicial to our firm belief in CHRIST, but rather an encouragement to it, is most evident; because it is grounded on her *Prerogatives*, which derive all their lustre from CHRIST, and are only, as it were, a reflection of the glory of the Son to the Mother: for it is thro' our steadfast belief of his *Divinity*, that we respect and honour the Blessed Virgin, subminist'ring

to him her Flesh in the accomplishment of the *Mystery of the Incarnation*, as Mother of God; and that we suppose her to have been favoured with the additional accumulation of Graces, already recited, in order to fit her for the sublime station to which she had been elected. The *Son* is therefore the fundamental cause of all her Privileges, and the immediate object of our Veneration; and we do not pretend to honour the *Mother* but with reference to the *Son*, and in him. Our devotion, then, to the Blessed Virgin, rather contributes to strengthen our faith in CHRIST, because, on this the other has an essential dependance.

HENCE it has been observed, at all times, that the greatest Lights of the Church, and Champions for CHRIST, have been professed advocates for the Blessed Virgin—on the other hand, that the enemies of the Church, and of CHRIST, have been avowed enemies of MARY; and there never were any Hereticks, (the *Collyridians*, a set of delirious women of *Thrace*, excepted, whose mad Blasphemy the Catholic Church utterly abhors) but, directly, or indirectly, were adversaries to her Name, and impugnors of her Memory.

OUR confidence in the Blessed Virgin's Intercession is much less a diminution of our hopes and dependance on CHRIST, because our trust on the one and the other, as has been said, is specifically different; viz, as of *Intercessor* and *Redeemer*; so that we apply to the *Mother* only

as a means to obtain an easier *access to the Son*, and to secure a participation of his infinite Merits and Sufferings, thro' her powerful Interest.

AND, lastly, a devoted attachment to the Blessed Virgin's service is so far from being an obstruction to the observance of divine precepts, and the practice of Evangelical Virtues ordained and recommended by CHRIST, that it is manifestly a help to these desirable and necessary purposes, and a spur to the execution of substantial duties. The principal Festivals, and most solemn Devotions instituted in her honour, have a relation to some circumstance of the *Incarnation*, and of our *Redemption*. Of the first are the Feasts of her Annunciation, Purification, &c. Among the instances of the second is the Devotion of the *Rosary*, which is a commemoration of all the doleful and joyful Mysteries: The Association for obtaining a happy Death, another; the design and drift whereof is to promote a pious and assured confidence in the Merits of our dying Saviour, thro' the powerful Intercession of his dolorous Mother, towards procuring us the happy passage (it so much interests us to wish for) out of Time into Eternity.

THE other Associations and Confraternities, erected in her honour, approved and confirmed by the Church, are so many particular Nurseries of all kind of Virtue; where a true and solid Piety is inculcated—the practice of a
stricter

strieter discipline, and the advancement of the cause of God and Religion, is solely attended to. And, it is remarkable, that among all the Sons of the Catholic Church, there are none who are tied down to strieter Regularities, and are bound to act more conformably to the precepts of CHRIST, and the rules of the Gospel, than the Members of those several Associations and Institutes erected and dedicated in the Blessed Virgin's name.

THEREFORE, in consequence to all these observations, and upon the many prudential motives alledged thro' the whole course of this particular controversy (but chiefly upon the basis of her undoubted prerogatives, which is the Groundwork of all) we think a singular and distinctive honour to be due to the Blessed Virgin's memory; and we profess a firm confidence in her Power and Interest, (superior to every other creature, whether Saint or Angel) as Intercessor to Almighty God for us. We believe, and hold, the same to be entirely rational; no ways derogatory to our supreme homage due to God, nor injurious to the mediatorship of CHRIST, as our Redeemer.

LET then her Adversaries attempt to discredit her as much as they please; their Calumnies can be no prejudice to the Blessed Virgin's cause; their inveterate spleen, affected dissingenuity, and studied cavils, shall only contribute to stimulate the zeal of every true
Son

Son of the Catholic Church, and faithful Client of the Blessed Virgin, to undertake her defence with more vigour, to assert her rightful Prerogatives against every opponent, and to repose an undoubted confidence in her powerful patronage. Therefore, in the supplication of the Church, we will incessantly call upon her to be aiding to us in our necessities—*To thy help* (that is to your Patronage and Intercession) *we have recourse, oh! Mother of God.* With the Church also we will daily request, that she will deign to accept from us (Sinners as we are) her just encomiums and praises, and enable us to fight her battles against the oppugners of her Blessed name—*Vouchsafe me to praise thee, oh! sacred Virgin; give me force against thine enemies.* Thus powerfully seconded, we doubt not to see the zeal of the Catholic Church, for the Blessed Virgin's honour, prevail, in spite of malice and calumny—to hear MARY for ever *Blessed*, as she herself has prophesied, *thro' all generations*—her cause every where triumphant; her clients rejoiced thereat, and fully comforted, and her Enemies confounded.

CHAP.



CHAP. VII.

The Catholic article of faith, concerning the lawfulness of venerating the Saints Relicks, and their Pictures and Images, considered.

ANOTHER Part of the Catholic Worship (relatively understood, according to the explanations and restrictions hereafter mentioned) is the *veneration of the Relicks of Saints*, and of their *Pictures and Images*, and is only a corollary to the precedent Article of the *Veneration and Invocation of the Saints* themselves. For, if a respective Honour is lawfully given to them, and is their undoubted due, (which is what we have evinced in the foregoing Controversy) a relative respect payable to their *Relicks* and to the pious memorials of their Persons and virtuous actions, seems but to follow from it as a natural consequence from its Premises; and, as a Type, is to be respected for the sake of its Original. And there are instances to be produced from human and domestic life in support of this practice.

Thus it is customary for a person to cherish the dear remains of a deceased parent or friend, and he willingly retains a picture, or any thing that is a revival of his memory—Yet, as agreeable

agreeable as the Catholic practice of respecting the pious emblems of the Saints, is to good sense and general usage, in these similar occurrences of common life, it is one of the principal articles of impeachment, which our adversaries affect to lodge against the Catholic Church, under the odious denominations of the *Fopperies of Popery* and a *superstitious worship*. And, indeed, was our Doctrine in this, as well as in other points, to stand or fall by their misrepresentations of it, it might come within their indictment: but, if truth is to prevail, we flatter ourselves to be as far out of the reach of it, and in as little danger of suffering from their cavils and slanders in this, as in any other point of the Catholic Faith.

BUT, before we set forth the genuine Belief of the Church on this head, and say *what it is*, it may be proper to declare *what it is not*, and to protest against our adversaries misrepresentations of it.

THEREFORE, first, we declare that we do not acknowledge any intrinsic Virtue inherent to the *Relics* of the Saints, much less to their *Pictures* and *Images*, as is by our adversaries ridiculously and wrongfully supposed, or rather maliciously imposed upon us.

SECONDLY, we deny and abjure any honour absolutely due to them in themselves; and therefore the charge of Idolatry or Superstition, which can only result from a Worship thus circumstanced, is unjust, false, and scandalous.

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WHAT, then, we believe and maintain in this point, is, that there is a Relative Honour due to the Saints *Relicks* and *Pictures*; that is, an Honour directed to the Saints themselves, (respecting, as I said before, the *Type* for the sake of the *Original*) and ultimately terminating in Almighty God, and centring in Him, according to the doctrine of the Church, sufficiently declared and explained in the foregoing Controversy.

IN this limited and relative sense we hold the Catholic Tenet of the *Veneration of the Saints Relicks*, and of their *Pictures and Images*, to be

FIRST, Nothing against Scripture, nor forbid by the Divine Precepts.

SECONDLY, That there are many precedents from the Revealed Writings to justify it.

THIRDLY, that it is much less repugnant to good sense and reason.

AND, lastly, That it is a worship, authorised and warranted by the practice of the primitive ages of the Church.

FOR the sake of method and perspicuity, we will discuss the two members of this Article (the Veneration of *Relicks* and *Pictures*) severally, beginning with the first.

SEC-

SECTION I.

The Veneration of the Relicks of the Saints is not contrary to the Word of God, nor to reason; and has the warrant of Antiquity, or primitive practice, to plead for it.

POSSESSION is said to comprehend eleven points of the Law; because it is admitted to give a prescriptive right to any tenure, barring a prior title made clear and indisputable. In virtue of this prescriptive right, the practice of the veneration of Relicks, among the rest of the articles of the Catholic Church, contested by our Adversaries, ought to subsist; and the lawfulness of it be allowed, unless just cause why it should be laid aside, can be produced; such as is *clear Scripture* against it, or *manifest inconveniences* appearing to result from the practice—And, that our adversaries have failed in these several pleas, is what I now take upon me to prove.

THEY, indeed, pretend to conclude a Divine forbiddance of the *Veneration of Relicks*, from a supposed reproof our blessed Saviour gave the Scribes and Pharisees, for adoring the Sepulchres of the Prophets, MATT. ch. 23. But it is evident from the drift of the whole chapter, that it was not the specific act of paying honour to the Monuments of those deceased faithful servants of God, which our blessed Lord found blameable, but the hypocritical disposition and corruption

corruption of their hearts, accompanying this outward shew of Devotion, which He inveighed against and reprov'd : *to wit*, They affected to honour the memory of their Prophets, and to celebrate their couragious sufferings in defence of *Truth*, at the same time that they were actually opposing themselves to the *fountain of Truth*, and were transcribing the deeds of the enemies of *Truth* into their own lives, by treading closely in their footsteps, by persecuting with a similar inveteracy and hatred, the Lord of Prophets ; and therefore our blessed Lord immediately prophetically added, *And do you also fill up the measure of your Fathers* (their iniquity). This counterfeit Devotion then, and mistaken Religion, our blessed Saviour justly condemns, and so does every true member of the Catholic Church ; which cannot any ways prejudice a well ordered *Veneration of the Relicks of the Saints*, in the manner it is adopted by the Catholic Church ; *to wit*, consisting in a due honour and respect paid to their memories—a commemoration of their virtues and glorious actions while on earth, and a pious emulation of them, and a desire of imitating them ; to which desirable purposes, the sight of these holy remains of the Saints serve as a memorial, and as a spur and incentive.

THE Reformers pretend to discover another implicit forbiddance of the Catholic practice, from the providential concealment of MOSES's body, from the Jews, after his decease. But it is

incumbent upon them, (in order to give weight to this fact, so as to render it serviceable to their purpose) to make it appear to have been designed either as a divine disapprobation of *any degree of religious honour* to be given to this Prophet's body; or if directly intended to prevent a Divine Worship, they must prove in this particular, the Catholic practice to coincide with it. But, we apprehend both horns of this dilemma to be faulty, or too short to reach us—And, first, that the fact was not designed as a token of Almighty God's disapprobation of *every kind of religious honour*, but barely to prevent a *divine Worship*, is evident from several circumstances.

THE superlative superstition of the people of *Israel*, and their violent propension to Idolatry, is to be gathered from almost every page of the Sacred History. This supposed, there was an apparent and imminent danger, if the remains of that great *Lawgiver* had continued among them, that the remembrance of his wonderful actions, and a false respect, or a mistaken gratitude, might have attracted to him divine honours from this self-blinded, wilful People: The body being translated, by the ministry of Angels, to an unknown place, this mischief was effectually prevented.

ST. JUDE, in his Catholic Epistle, does not obscurely insinuate this presumption, hinting at a contention between St. MICHAEL and *Satan*, about this great Prophet's body: the latter,

ter, being earnest to have it within knowledge and view to the people of Israel, as an occasion to them, and object of Idolatry ; the other, as has been said, by the divine appointment, transferring it out of sight or knowledge, to prevent this great evil.

BUT no evil or irregularity of this nature can, with any colour of truth or justice, be charged on the Catholic practice of venerating the Relicks of Saints. We do not even venerate the Saints themselves, but with an honour barely religious, of an inferior nature, much less their Ashes or their Relicks ; therefore, as I just said, neither horn of the dilemma reaches us, or does any hurt to the Catholic cause : and this objection, on the whole, is as unconvulsive as the former.

BUT while the Reformers are utterly destitute of arguments from Scripture against this Catholic practice, we flatter ourselves to be able to produce uncontested precedents, from the Sacred History, in defence of it.

IN the Book of Kings, c. 13. v. 21. we read of a dead Man raised to life by being placed contiguous to the bones of the Prophet ELISHA — In the Acts of the Apostles, c. 19. v. 12. we are informed that handkerchiefs and aprons which had touched the body of St. PAUL, were operative of wonderful cures among the sick ; and were efficacious in expelling Evil Spirits from Possessed Persons : therefore the dead re-
mains

mains of ELISHA, and the aprons and handkerchiefs which had touched St. PAUL, were, certainly, to those persons who had received benefit from them, and to others who might have been desirous of partaking of the like benefit, objects of respect and veneration: and, by their making use of them in order to procure the wanted relief, 'tis plain that they reposed an undoubted trust and confidence in them. And whereas Almighty God blessed their pious faith with present and most miraculous cures, he thereby shewed he approved of it.

I CANNOT pass over, in silence, one memorable instance; which, tho' not referring to the Relicks of God's servants, but to those of his Blessed Son, CHRIST himself, is equally pertinent to our subject, and conclusive; since both the Relicks of CHRIST himself, as well as those of the Saints, are equally excluded by the Reformers from being the object of religious worship; and yet, in the case we are going to consider, it has the warrant of CHRIST's express approbation.

IN the ninth chapter of St. MATTHEW, v. 21, &c. we read of a woman, who, having been afflicted some years with a Bloody Flux, when the stubbornness of her distemper had baffled all the endeavours and trials of human art; animated by the fame of the miraculous cures our Blessed Saviour had wrought, she resolved to have recourse to this divine physician; she accordingly gave a diligent look out for him—
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she meets him in the public streets, and tho' surrounded with such a throng of people, that she despaired of getting free access to his person, yet, full of faith, she said within herself, *If I shall but reach near enough to touch his Garment, I shall be healed* *. She accordingly made her way thro' the crowd ; she did touch his garment, and lo ! what was the consequence ? Did our Blessed Saviour reprove her for indulging an idle fancy, or a superstitious credulity ? No, he turned to her, and said, *Take courage, Daughter, thy Faith has made thee sound* † ; and effectually, in that instant, as the Evangelist informs us, virtue flowed from him, and the infirm party found herself most miraculously and perfectly cured.

Now, in consequence to this scriptural and undeniable fact, I beg leave to put one plain question—Had this same woman, or any other labouring under a like lingering disorder, when our Blessed Saviour was hoisted up on the Cross, or when laid even in the Sepulchre, (there being no possible access to his sacred person)—had, I say, she said then, as she did on this other occasion, *If I can but get to touch his Garment, lying at the foot of the Cross, I doubt not but I shall be healed*—would such an inward persuasion within herself have been more irregular, presumptuous, or reprobable in this, than it was in the prior circumstances ? In the first we have heard our blessed Savi-

* MATT. C. 9. v. 21. † *ibid.* v. 22.

our giving his approbation of the woman's faith, and rewarding it with a present cure : the faith in both cases would have been specifically the same, grounded on a stedfast belief of a divine Virtue flowing from CHRIST's person, tho' communicated by the means of a bare touch of his Garment ; therefore we must conclude, that the faith in both one and the other would have been equally lawful, and to be equally applauded.

THIS example makes good the third proof I undertook to produce in favour of the Catholic practice, its reasonableness and agreeableness to good sense ; which, however, are further enforced from the following reflections.

AND, first, with regard to those things which appertained to CHRIST's person, as his *Cloaths* ; or which had any relation to him, as the *Cross*, *Nails*, and other instruments of his sacred Passion ; whether considered as the *material cause* of our *Redemption*, resulting from them, or as *memorials* of that ineffable Mercy ; it surely cannot be deemed repugnant to good sense or reason, to pay a relative honour to them, under that consideration ; (according to the explanations and meaning so often settled and repeated) at least I am confident it is highly agreeable to pious sense, and becoming every one to set an inestimable value on them, being thus sanctified by CHRIST's sacred Person, at this ever memorable time, to us ever dear and precious.

SECONDLY

SECONDLY, As to the *Relicks* of the Saints, the *Martyrs*, *Penitents*, *Confessors*, and the Servants of God of every class, distinguished by their eminent virtues, what are they else but so many trophies of the glorious victories they gained over the Flesh, the World, and the Devil—and so many incentives to trace their footsteps, and to emulate their heroic Atchievements? Under the first view, they become the objects of our Admiration and pious Contemplations; in the other, they are productive of the most desirable Advantage to us, by stimulating and forming us to the practice of every Christian Virtue: in both respects the devotion is perfectly consonant to good sense, profitable and commendable.

If we look on the Saints in another light, *viz*, in as much as they were, during their mortal Pilgrimage on earth, the living temples of the HOLY GHOST, in whom he deigned to inhabit, and to honour them with his special presence, by his sanctifying Grace—If we view them again, in the close of their Career, becoming devoted Victims to the cause of God and his Church, by laying down their lives in the defence of it—If, lastly, we contemplate them as now arrived into the port of rest from all their labours and sufferings, and their souls (the better part of their human fabrick) in actual possession of an everlasting, unperishable Crown, the just reward of their faithful services; these are so many reasons to

justify, and motives to recommend to us a respective veneration of their Bodies, their other part, which having been individual Companions in all the conflicts, hardships and sufferings of human Life, are doomed to be, at the Resurrection, sharers and copartners in Glory.

GOD required of MOSES and JOSHUA, *Exod. 3. Jos. 5.* to pull off their shoes out of respect to the ground they stood upon, being sanctified by his own presence, or that of his Angels. Why therefore may not we——why should not we rather pay a similar respect to the sacred dust and ashes of the Saints bodies, in which Almighty God had taken, heretofore, such a singular complacency, and had sanctified by the special presence of his holy Grace? Add to these rational presumptions, in behalf of the Catholic practice, that Almighty God has testified by the miracles above recited, and others we shall have an occasion of mentioning hereafter, (wrought by virtue of these precious remains of his faithful Servants) how agreeable it is to his divine Majesty that we should pay a relative respect to them.

IN effect, all these reasons appeared so cogent and conclusive to the primitive Fathers of the Church, for the veneration of Relicks, that, when VIGILANTIUS, an Heresiarch of the fourth Century, presumed to decry the holy practice, the attempt was received by the whole Church with the utmost detestation and abhorrence,

rence, and anathematized as an audacious innovation, till then unheard of.

ST. HIEROM particularly distinguished himself, in defence of the Catholic practice, against this upstart oppugner of it. His own words will best declare his real sentiments of, and sincere regard for one, and his abhorrence of the other. VIGILANTIUS, says he, *fights with the unclean spirit, against the spirit of CHRIST, by asserting that the tombs of Martyrs are not to be revered* *. And again, *The Devils, with which VIGILANTIUS is possessed, roar at the Relicks, and confess they cannot bear the presence of the Martyrs—all the bishops in the world are against him* †. And, in his fifty-third epistle, he writes thus—“ You tell me that VIGILANTIUS vomits once more his poison against the Relicks of Martyrs ; calling us *dust-worshippers, and idolaters ; for worshiping dead mens bones*. O unhappy Man ! who can never be sufficiently lamented.

FROM what this holy Father has said, in the management of this Controversy with his antagonist, there occur two obvious remarks—First, that what were the sentiments of VIGILANTIUS on the subject of veneration of Relicks, which St. HIEROM anathematized as Heretical, and treated with the utmost indignation, are the identical sentiments and opinion of the Reformers at this present time.

* Lib. cont. VIGILAN, † *ibid.*

SECONDLY,

SECONDLY, that what this holy Father opposed to them, as the unanimous and orthodox Doctrine of the Church, at that early time of Day, is the same which the Catholic Church makes profession of and teaches now: therefore, St. HIEROM being our Judge, we are cleared, our enemies condemned, the Catholic Doctrine declared the Doctrine of the whole Church at that early time of day, (*All the Bishops in the world are against him*, St. HIEROM above~~said~~) and the opposition censured and anathematized as heretical. After so ample and explicit a testimony, I might spare myself the trouble of quoting any of this primitive Fathers cotemporaries.

THAT the sentiments of St. AMBROSE, and St. AUSTIN, were entirely conformable to his, will appear hereafter, from the recital of Miracles, (which we shall have occasion of quoting from them) to have been wrought by virtue of the Saints Relicks, which they declare themselves to have been eye-witnesses of.

HOWEVER, THEODORET, a Greek Father of the same age, is so explicit on the subject, that I cannot forbear closing with him these venerable testimonies. "Cities and villages" says he, "dividing among themselves the bodies of the Martyrs, esteem them their guardians, and the protectors and physicians both of their souls and bodies—for, tho' the body is divided, the blessing is not; but is bountifully distributed according to the faith with which it is approached*."

* THEOD. lib. 8. cont. Græc. T. 4. 597, 594.

THIS, now, is so full an attestation of the Catholic practice subsisting at that early time of day, that no stronger proof can be expected. If need, I could trace it from the Apostles time; but what, for brevity's sake, I pass over, the curious reader may, for his further satisfaction, meet with, in a full magazine of testimonies in every controvertist who has treated professedly on the subject; or, if he chuses to go higher, he need but consult the learned Greek Ecclesiastical Historian, EUSEBIUS, of the fourth Century, where he will be informed, among other instances, how the sacred bones and ashes of the holy Martyrs, IGNATIUS and POLYCARP, disciples of the Apostles themselves, were treasured up, and a religious honour paid to them by the Churches and Congregations of their respective charge.

BUT, as sollicitous as we have been, to prove antiquity on our side, in the present debate, and flatter ourselves to have succeeded; yet we still have made no advance towards gaining a modern Sceptic, and those of his way of thinking, who avowing their sentiments, are pleased to reject their evidence; unless we can shew just reason, why it should be admitted.

IN order to make good this plea, I must be obliged to trespass on my Reader with another Section on the present subject.

SECTION

SECTION II.

A prosecution of the Subject, with a defense of the primitive Fathers, as vouchers to this, and every Catholic Doctrine—occasioned from a late writer calling their credit in question, and dismissing their evidence.

AS we have been free of our citations from the primitive Fathers, both in the present and the preceding Controversies, in support of the Catholic side of the question; it might be wondered at, if I was to take no notice of the exceptions our modern sceptic has made to these venerable Evidences.

THIS was the late DR. CONYERS MIDDLETON, who (in his *Free Enquiry into the miraculous Powers*,) leaving the beaten Track of his Friends, of contesting the antiquity of the Catholic *Tenets, Rites and Practices*, has gone another way to impugn them, which is, to invalidate the testimonies of their most ancient vouchers.

OUR *Tenets, &c.* he allows to be of long standing—the Fathers of those primitive Ages, he acknowledges to have been abettors of the respective *Tenets, &c.*—St. CHRYSOSTOM, JEROME, AUSTIN, by name, whom he frankly confesses to have taught, practiced and recommended several *Dogmas and Rites*, now Popish, and rejected by Protestants as *Unscriptural, Superstitious and Idolatrous* *. He moreover owns

* Poss'cr. to his Protest. Antag.

that

that they produce numerous *Miracles* in confirmation of the same *. But then how does he go about to justify his rejecting *Tenets*, &c. confessed so ancient, and to withstand *Evidences* so well attested? 'Tis foreign to my purpose to run thro' All that the Doctor advances under the name of an Argument, in support of his wild opposition; his exceptions, in general, to the existence of the miraculous Powers in the Church, we shall have an occasion of examining in its proper place: his main objection, affecting the present Controversy, and on which he lays a particular stress, consists of two members—the first, That the alledged miracles were brought as evidences to some Catholic *Doctrine*, or *Institution*, which he thinks, upon Reformation Principles, to be *Erroneous* †. Among several examples, he instances it with respect to the point we have been just considering, the *Veneration of Relicks*—The second member of his objection is, the insufficiency of their Vouchers.—His argumentation, on behalf of the first, is to the following effect.

MIRACLES, says he, were attested to have been wrought by the means of *Relicks*, which gave a sanction to, and promoted the *veneration* which was paid to them—But this practice he thinks *superstitious*: Therefore the alledged *Miracles*, in support of them, he concludes to be spurious and counterfeit. The *major*, or

* Introd. p. 76. † *ibid.*

first proposition, is one of the Catholic proofs we have dwelt upon above, for the lawfulness of the Practice. The *minor*, or second proposition, which is wholly Protestant, goes a begging, because it supposes the *practice* to be *superstitious*, which is the point to be proved: and, therefore, the consequence inferred from it, goes also a begging, and is unconvincive.

THE same way of arguing was just as good in the mouth of the Jew and Infidel, against the *Miracles* of our blessed Saviour, and of his Apostles. Our blessed Lord urged to the Jews the *signs* and *miracles* he wrought, as evidences to his divine Mission, or to his being their *Messias*—The Jews perversely refused to acknowledge him in that capacity: and therefore, as a cover to their obstinacy, were constrained to blaspheme his miracles, overlooking the hand of God, so conspicuous in them, and imputing them to a diabolical virtue. In the same manner, afterwards, the Infidel argued against the *Miracles* of the Apostles. The apostolic *Miracles* were operated in confirmation of the *Christian Law*, which they preached to the Infidel Nations: but many of them could not prevail on themselves to submit to the Law; therefore were also necessitated to reject the *Miracles* which were its evidences, imputing them to Magic, and disbelieving them to be the effect of a Divine Power.

Now whether these several argumentations, the Doctor's, against the Point in question, and the

the Jew's and Infidel's against the Miracles of CHRIST and his Apostles, are not exactly parallel, I submit to the judgment of the candid Reader: both one and the other rejecting the respective evidences upon the same grounds; *to wit*, because they were an attestation of something they were not inclined to believe.

THE second member of the Doctor's objection to the said Miracles, the pretended insufficiency of their Vouchers, remains still to be examined. To be sure, with respect to those who live at a distance of time from these evidences, that is, who come after the respective Miracles were wrought, a further proof of the truth of them may be expected; and this can be no other, as it is the object of human faith, than the credit of their vouchers.

THESE to the Miracles of CHRIST and his Apostles, are the holy *Scriptures*, whose authority is admitted by Christians of all sects and denominations; and, being believed to be divine inspiration, renders the truths it delivers the objects of divine faith: to the Miracles of succeeding ages, (as they are I say, bare objects of human faith) are the cotemporary *Fathers* attesting them, whose credit has been established, and never scrupled till now lately, that Doctor MIDDLETON thought fit to call it in question; and in order to succeed in his temerarious attempt, omitting nothing his fertile genius could devise, not even scurrility and slander

flander, to blacken their characters and to sink their reputation. A string of injuries and abuse, which he liberally bestows upon these great Lights of the Church, in the few following extracts, out of a great many to be met with in his *Free Enquiry*, will give the reader a specimen of the Doctor's own self-sufficiency, and of his utter contempt of every one else.

HE sets out, in his Preface, by telling us, that "the Fathers are extremely credulous and
 "superstitious, possessed with prejudices, and
 "an enthusiastic zeal, and *scrupling no art or*
 "means by which they could propagate their prin-
 "ciples. In short, that they were of a charac-
 "ter, from which nothing could be expected
 "that was candid and impartial——especially
 "where Religion was the subject, which, a-
 "bove all other motives, strengthens every
 "bias, and influences every passion of human
 "mind*." Can any thing be more derogatory to the honour of these great Men, or more reverse to the general repute they have possessed in the Christian World thro' all ages, than the picture of them the Doctor has here drawn? But it was his business to prepossess his reader against them in the beginning, that whatsoever indignities he should offer to them, in the body of his Work, might neither surprise him, nor be disrelished: and, by the way, he makes as free with *Religion*, in the above Extract, as he does with its faithful Ad-

* Pref. p. 31. 32.

vocates, whilst he would have us believe it to be subservient to the worst of purposes, *viz*, to inflame every passion of human mind ; (that he must mean *evil passions*, the drift of his discourse evinces) in which he contradicts the sense of every good Man, concerning this divine institution, which has always been thought to have been directed to the contrary effect, *viz*, to the putting a *check* on our passions, and to bring them under subjection.

WHAT the Doctor proceeds to tell us, with a confident assurance, in his introduction, that the Miracles of the fourth Age *were either forged by the Fathers of that Age, or what they knew, at least, to be forged* *, is boldly said ; but without a proof.

THE same injurious reflections, which he repeats afterwards, come also a begging—are wholly arbitrary, and accompanied with a heap of incoherencies and contradictions : his words are, that the Miracles of the early Ages “ were mere fictions, which the *pious* “ *and zealous* Fathers, partly from a weak credulity, partly from reasons of policy, believing some to be true, and knowing all to be useful, were induced to espouse and propagate, for the support of a righteous cause †. For, that a *righteous cause* should want its support from such sinister methods, is impious

* Introduct. p. 83. 84. † *ibid*. p. 91.

to imagine, and injurious to the dispositions of Providence.

AND again, that the Fathers, allowed to be *pious* and *zealous*, should be influenced to make use of these sinister means, is to make them the most wicked of Men, while he calls them the best : and, in short, for *piety*, *zeal*, with *policy*, *hypocrisy* and *forgery*, to be jumbled together into one character, implies a contradiction of such a monstrous size, as is shocking not only to *pious sense*, but also to *common sense*.

IN the next Page he uses these venerable vouchers with no more ceremony than he had done all along, taxing them with *espousing forged miracles*, with the manifest appearance of *design*, *trick*, *juggling* and *contrivance**—This is the substance of his charge ; and, as they are only the same indecent reflections, repeated over and over again, I forbear to tire the Reader's patience, and to trespass on his piety, with reciting them at length.

IN his Postscript, in answer to his Protestant Antagonist, after allowing the primitive Fathers to be men of *piety* and *sanctity of Life*, the *best of Christians*, *distinguished by their exemplar Zeal*, the *chief ornaments of the Church*—Yet he will have them to be subject to passions, prejudices and error ; and continues still to question their *veracity*, and to charge them with

* Introduct. p. 92.

being guilty of *invention* themselves, and of *propagating known forgeries*. Now if these mixed incoherent Characters are not contradictions, surely *truth* and *falsehood*, *sanctity* and *impiety* are not; nor can *light* and *darkness* be more opposite.

AND as for what he often repeats, of their being betrayed, through a pious credulity, into the belief of *lies* and *forgeries*, imposed upon them——allowing this to be possible, with respect to reports they received by second and third hands, yet we cannot suppose them to be so short sighted, as not to have been able to distinguish *truth* from *falsehood*, in facts which they themselves were eye witnesses of; and, as they are confessed to be *pious* men, and *zealous* for the righteous Cause, it was a conduct incompatible with that character to impose *known falsehood* and willful *inventions* and *forgeries* of their own upon us.

So inconsistent is the Doctor, in his characteristics of these shining ornaments of the Church; obliged, every now and then, to own them to be *pious*, *zealous* and *good* men, at the same time that the whole design and drift of his work is to bring them into discredit, by representing them as the *weakest* of men; and withall, occasional *cheats*, and arrant *hypocrites* and *impostors*.

BUT, I'll now instance two eminent Lights of the Church (out of numbers) to whose
learning

learning and *sagacity* the Doctor can make as little exception, as to their *piety* and *probity*: these are St. AMBROSE and St. AUSTIN; the former reciting Miracles operated by the Relicks of St. GERVASIUS and PROTASIUS, of which he declares himself an eye-witness*.

THE other informing us of above seventy Miracles, wrought by the Relicks of St. STEPHEN, within his own Diocese, and consequently within his own knowledge, inspection and examination†.

BUT, now, if these pious, learned and great men were, on these occasions, so well circumstanced, as to be enabled to become unexceptionable Evidences to the truth of the Facts they attest (as they certainly were)—and, if their joint *learning*, *sagacity* and *probity* rendered them, otherwise, so well qualified for the task, that their veracity cannot reasonably be questioned, nor their testimony be refused (which is no more than what is due to the great repute they always possessed in the world—what every one has allowed them, 'till Doctor MIDDLETON'S *free Inquiry* appeared; and which I don't remember that he himself has thought fit to dispute them by name)—Then, I say, from these just concessions, the following consequences directly flow, and must be admitted.

FIRST, that out of the List of the Fathers, whom the Doctor impeaches of a weak and

* St. AMBR. Ep. 5. † St. AUG. l. 22. de Civ.
Dei. c. 8.

unreasonable credulity, or of invention and forgery, these two great Men, at least, have a right to be excepted—Secondly, that if they merit any credit, and their testimony is to be admitted, then, the *eneration of Relicks* must from thence be allowed to have been practised in the fourth Century, and even to be warranted by Miracles—Thirdly, that therefore, (what belongs more directly to our future enquiry) in that age, Miracles had not ceased in the Church; which overturns the whole System of the Doctor's opposition to the Miraculous Powers.

BUT with relation to my present subject, I, at least, humbly apprehend the preceding concessions to be a full justification of the two Fathers, aforesaid, from the aspersions and dirt he has thrown at them all in general; and even on these it cannot stick, because, hitherto, we have had nothing but bold charges against them without proof, fraught with calumny and injury.

AND the few proofs, he does pretend to bring, which we will now examine, how weak and trivial they are, will, I apprehend, be manifest to every one divested of passion and prejudice.

HE sets out by laying down a Rule every one will subscribe to, to wit, *That the credit the Fathers can claim, as evidences, must depend upon their approved judgment and veracity.*

IN order, therefore, to invalidate their testi-

mony on the first head, he alledges several exotical opinions, some of them are said to have sustained, which we reject as well as he—— The greatest men have overshot themselves. But, what then? Because a contemplative man, may be lost in some matter of speculation, must not he be allowed common sense in the practical occurrences of Life? Or, because his Understanding being limited, is liable to mistake in what is above its comprehension; must therefore his Eyes be supposed to be shut, or, being open, not able to distinguish its objects, nor to discern truth from falshood? Or, infine, if he receives his information from another, may not he have the discretion to enquire into the truth of it? The Doctor would have taken it amiss that he should have been thought void of common sense, because he had the bad luck, in several points of Literature, as well as Divinity, to differ in opinion from the whole learned world besides.

THEREFORE, in a word, St. AUSTIN, AMBROSE, JEROM, and any of the rest, might have been mistaken in a controverted point, (not appertaining to Faith, or not decided) or have been wholly ignorant of several modern discoveries, (such was St. AUSTIN's mistake about the *Antipodes*) and yet be allowed to have had the Sense to distinguish *truth* from a *cheat* in the Miracles they saw with their own eyes; or the discretion to make use of the means,

means, they had in their Power, of being certified about the relations they received from second or third hands : therefore, on summing up the whole, I think this great exception the Doctor makes to the Fathers Judgment, comes to nothing.

HIS imputation to them of weakness for their belief of *Necromancers* and *Magicians*, seems to be still more precipitate and groundless, because we gather from Scripture, that such ministers of Satan were at all times in being.

HIS next exception to their evidence is upon account of their want of veracity ; and, I apprehend, not more successful than the former. This exception he grounds principally upon pretended *Inventions* and *Forgeries*, which he very liberally, as we have heard, charges upon them ; but without the least proof, and therefore it goes a begging and deserves no further answer.

HE, however, strengthens his weak presumptions upon charging them with espousing some spurious Legends for Apostolic Writings, and levelling them with the authority of the Scriptures ; from whence he concludes, that they were equally capable of forging Miracles themselves, or of propagating known forgeries—but how ridiculous ? Their adopting such writings (if ever they did) argues, indeed, an error of Judgment, (and a very pardonable one, till such time

time as the Church had declared which Scriptures were genuine, which apocryphal, which canonical, and which not) but it cannot be looked upon as a forfeiture of their veracity. And, in a word, because thro' imperfect informations, and the darkness of the times, they might have unwarily mistaken one Book for another, and *innocently* led others into the same mistake, this can be no reason for to conclude that they would designedly impose upon us a *counterfeit* miracle for a *real* one, or a *known* falsehood for a truth.

YET upon these weak grounds, has the Doctor the confidence of laying his indictment against them. Those, whom the Body of Christianity, of all ages, constantly respected as pillars of the Church for their *knowledge* and *wisdom*, and its greatest ornaments for their *virtue* and *probity*—Those, has the Doctor branded with the contemptuous characteristics of being *weak Men*, or the infamous one, of being *cheats* and *impostors*.

THE first draught of their Picture, as we have seen in the Preface, is embellished with these masterly strokes of his skill in reviling; and with lines of the same complexion he finishes their portraiture in his Postscript; and with the same I'll conclude this specimen of his scurrility. In short, he sums up the infamous character he had given them, by telling us, *That they did not scruple to invent or propagate any fiction, how gross soever, which served*
to

to promote the Interest of Christianity, or of any particular Rite or Doctrine *.

Now the charge, as far as it affects the holy Fathers, is only the same dirt which he had thrown at them over and over again, and as often wiped off, in the course of these short observations; but to say, that *Christianity* was founded, or, at least, its Cause promoted by *fiction and forgery*, I must further observe can be no means of advancing its credit with *Deists*, *Infidels*, and *Unbelievers*; and, I am sure, is very injurious to our notion of a *wise and benign Providence*: yet these are the inevitable consequences of his wild notions, the dreadful consequences (if the advancement of the Cause of Christianity depended on him, or was in danger of suffering from his slanders) that the whole Body of Christians would be obliged to him for. This, infine, the extremity his determined spleen against the primitive Fathers, and vain attempt to sink their credit, has drove him to—
They are set forth as dotards or arrant cheats and impostors; Christianity a juggle; and, consequently, All who have embraced its Law, and payed a deference to its faithful Advocates, meer Dupes and Biggots.

Now, to undertake to do full justice to the honour of the Fathers, and to the cause of Christianity, against the Doctor's unnatural invasion upon it, would carry me beyond the

* Postscript, p. 158.

design of this Essay—In touching occasionally upon their Defence, as far as was just pertinent to my present subject, it has obliged me almost to stray from it : therefore, leaving the laudable cause to better Advocates, and wholly passing by the indignities he offers to the memory of the Martyrs, by suspecting the purity of the motives which engaged them to make the generous sacrifice, and imputing their courage, in the glorious combat, to obstinacy—omitting the utter dislike and contempt he every where expresses of the state of retirement, under the scornful appellation of *monkery*, and of those who had consecrated themselves therein to the Divine service; with many other flirts less pertinent to my present subject

I ONLY beg leave to observe, from the flight sketch I have given of the Doctor's odious Undertaking, that he has discovered a good share of confidence in his own judgment, to oppose it to the sense of the whole learned Christian World, since the establishment of Christianity ; who always revered these monuments of Antiquity, for their *sagacity*, *integrity* and *veracity* : and it was a bold attempt to pretend to shake *Their* authority, whom we have always looked upon as the *pillars* of our Church, and whom his friends would fain have arrogated to themselves for *props* of theirs.

THEREFORE the question between the Doctor and us, and even between him and his own friends, relatively to the three or four first Centuries,

Centuries, and lower, is, Whether, in compliment to his *single* and *singular* judgment, the *primitive Fathers* are to be sent adrift, their verdict to be disregarded, and all those to be reputed *dupes* who have paid a deference to their authority? Or whether, in spite of the Doctor, these ancient supports of the Church may still keep their ground, and their *sagacity*, *integrity* and *veracity* be relied on?

TILL this point is cleared up, I am sensible that all the testimonies we have hitherto produced from these venerable Vouchers, will carry little weight with persons of the Doctor's sceptical way of thinking. If what I have here presumed to offer in defence of the *Fathers*, is not to them satisfactory, yet, as we have to deal with others, that is, with the generality of Protestants, who have not come into his extravagant *reveries*, I flatter myself that what I have extracted from the *primitive Fathers* in support of our side of the question, in the foregoing debates, will, by them, be looked upon in a more favourable light; and that what I have now offered on the present subject will be sufficient to make good the first part of my theme; *viz*, that the Catholic practice of the Veneration of the Relicks of Saints, is not contrary to Scripture, nor to the divine prohibition—— that it has many precedents from Scripture in support of it——

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is much less repugnant to good sense and reason ; and has *universal antiquity* to vouch for it.

S E C T I O N III.

The veneration of Pictures and Images justified upon the aforesaid principles.

AS destitute of arguments from Scripture as we have proved our Adversaries to be, in support of their opposition against the first part of the Catholic Practice, its *veneration of the Relicks* of Saints : they plume themselves with better success, from that sacred source, against the second branch of it, our *veneration of Pictures and Images*. And, indeed, it cannot be denied, but that there are Texts to be produced, which, interpreted according to the dead letter, or being dis-jointed from the context, and tortured to a forced meaning ; or abstracted from particular circumstances, to which they related, may seem to plead for their purpose. But, if these sacred authorities are sifted to the bottom, and are confronted with these several circumstances, to which they refer, and are viewed in their true light, we flatter ourselves that, so far from appearing to be against us, the Ballance will still fall into the Catholic Scale.

It is from the commandments that our Adversaries pretend to draw their capital argument against us. In the first of these, or
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(according to the order of the commandments, as it is settled by others) in the second, it is said *Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing or Image*, or, as the septuagint interpret it, *Thou shalt not make to thyself an Idol*, that is, an Image to be to you an *object* of *divine Honour* and *adoration*. The sequel of the Commandment shews this to be the true meaning, it following immediately, and you *shall not adore them*, &c. Numerous circumstances prove this and no other to be the real design and intent of the Divine injunction; the following reflections in particular evince it, I apprehend, to a degree of evidence.

THE cause of Satan and his fellow rebel spirits shameful disgrace and fatal catastrophe, is well known to have been an inordinate desire and ambition of becoming like to the Almighty—I will be, said Satan, *like unto the highest*—and tho' he and his associates were instantly crushed, in the very conception of this extravagant thought, and in punishment of it even deprived of that state of bliss to which they had been created; yet, being in their nature fixed, and inflexible in their wills, and not to be diverted by the dreadful alteration of their condition, from what they had been once bent upon; the vain and extravagant ambition was still predominant, and adhered to them.

ALMIGHTY GOD had therefore no sooner made the creature Man for to succeed to their forfeited happiness, but they formed a project
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of soliciting him into a partnership in their Revolt. To this effect they first tampered with our first parents in paradise, seducing them to act refractorily to the divine Will, by a positive breach of God's commands. Satan, next, pursued his favourite scheme of setting himself up for a Deity, by prevailing on the rest of ADAM's unfortunate progeny to desert their great Creator, to lift under his standard, and to acknowledge him as their lord and sovereign : and yet, as monstrous as this scheme was in itself, 'tis incredible how easily deluded Man was gained over to it. In every corner of the earth an Altar was raised to the infernal Demon—his Idol placed on it, and adored. The sagacious Egyptians, the learned Grecians and Romans bent to it their knees ! even those, who put in particular pretensions to knowledge, or to the science of wisdom, and took upon them to be teachers of it to others, (the much-famed Philosophers) were not free from the general infatuation.

THE Divine Worship, thus supplanted thro' Satan's hellish stratagems, was confined to a handful of people, whom Almighty God had selected and secreted for his own divine service ; and had, in order to ensure them to his interest, prevented, with incessant and innumerable blessings, and had manifested himself to them by unheard-of prodigies : and yet, in spite of all these strong ties of fidelity, this favourite, chosen people could not be kept close
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to their duty: they were not wholly untainted with the epidemic infection: an unaccountable propension to the general evil (*apostacy* and *idolatry*) was found to be their predominant passion.

IN these circumstances it is not to be wondered at, it was even necessary that Almighty God, graciously vouchsafing to deliver to this his select people, a law, which was to be a sure guide to them into the paths of righteousness, should make his divine Worship, exclusive of every thing that was incompatible with, or prejudicial to this law, (according to respective circumstances) the principal object of it; and that, consequently thereto, he should caution them against, and even expressly forbid them to make Sculptures and every graven thing, as far as they might become a remote occasion to them of the fatal mischief, *Superstition* and *Idolatry*: yet, that Almighty God did not lay upon them this command without restriction, is evident; because he himself, on several occasions, reversed his own law; as for instance, when, *Numb. 21. v. 8. 9.* he ordered a brazen Serpent to be made; which, by being barely looked upon, was to become a prompt remedy to the bite of fiery Serpents, sent by Almighty God among them in punishment of their infidelities. He also, *Exod. 25. v. 18.* commanded cherubims of beaten gold to be placed over the Ark of the Covenant, in the very
t. Sanctuary,

Sanctuary, that is, in the place of Divine Worship.

FROM these, then, and several other instances to be met with in the Sacred History, it is plain that the divine prohibition of Sculptures and graven things was occasional, and limited; *to wit*, that they were barely forbid to be made as objects of adoration; and therefore were only as a seasonable precaution, at that time, to prevent so great an evil.

It must be imputed to a like cause that the Church of CHRIST, in its infancy, might have been more reserved in the use of sacred Pictures and Images, than it was afterwards; *viz*, lest the new converts, scarce weaned from idolatrous worship, should have mistaken the intent and meaning of the use of them; or weak minds have taken occasion of offence and scandal at it.

THIS same reason best accounts for that act of St. EPIPHANIUS (which our Adversaries lay so great a stress upon, in their opposition to the Catholic practice) of his pulling down a painted figure, or representation, hanging before a Church Porch—I say, it was likely for no other cause than to remove the cause of some excess and abuse, or occasional scandal, that had happened from it. For, tho' it is a part of the Catholic Belief, that the veneration of pious Pictures and Images is, in itself, absolutely lawful; yet the actual use of them has been occasionally suspended, or allowed,
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by the Church; as she was determined to one or the other, by the different face and vicissitude of times and circumstances.

THERE WAS an apparent reason, upon the first foundation of Christianity, whilst Idolatry yet bore an almost uncontrouled sway over the generality of mens minds, opinions and belief, and was in the meridian of its empire, that all such practices, otherwise lawful and commendable in themselves, should be superseded; which might seem to have the least alliance or similitude to the idolatrous worship, which the propagation of the Christian Faith was to abolish. *Pictures* and *Images* were objects of this kind, indifferent in themselves, but occasionally, as we have seen, of a dangerous consequence; and yet, even at that time, we find that they were not wholly disused or laid aside; witness the singular reverence which was always paid to the sign of the holy Cross, approved and encouraged by Heaven itself, when CON-
STANTINE the Great, the first Christian Emperor, was moved himself, by a miraculous Apparition in the air of this sacred Ensign of our redemption, to embrace the Faith of CHRIST, and to establish it thro' the extent of his dominions, upon the ruins of Idolatry.

IN process of time, when the Empire of *Idolatry* being quite subverted, and its spirit wholly eradicated, and the use of *Pictures* and *Images* was no longer attended with any circumstances, perilsous and prejudicial to the purity
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of Faith, or injurious to the Divine Worship; when, on the other hand they were found by experience, to be a means and help to promote a solid piety, and a lively devotion; it was then that she vigorously opposed a set of counterfeited zealots for truth, (really professed Enemies of it) stiled *Iconoclasts* or *Image-breakers*, who decried a pious and regular use of these helps and incentives to devotion: It was then that she enacted, by decree, in the second Council of Nice, that it was good to retain Pictures and Images in our Churches, not only as ornaments, but as an honourable memorial of CHRIST and his Saints, and as an aid to raise our hearts to heavenly things; and declared a relative honour, out of respect to the persons they represent, to be due to them*.

YET the Church, even at this critical time, (according to her usual discretion and prudence, thro' the supernatural wisdom infused into her, under the immediate influence and direction of the HOLY GHOST) had the precaution to provide against any abuse of her decrees in favour of these emblems of Devotion, that might be made by her own Children; or any censures, aspersions and slanders, that could be occasionally cast on them by her enemies; in signifying that she absolutely excludes from them all sort of Divine Worship: so the Council of Nice, Act. 7, which the Council of Trent has explained more explicitly, putting this article out of the reach of mistake, malice or calum-

* Second Council. Nice, Act. 7. Council. Trent. Sess. 25.

ny, by declaring further, *That we are not to believe that there is any Divinity or Power in them, for which they are to be worshiped; and that we are not to pray to them, nor to repose our trust and confidence in them* †.

IN consequence to the Doctrine of the Church, thus clearly settled and explained, it is very well known, (and every Child, who has learnt his Catechism, can tell you) that the honour and respect we pay to Pictures and Images, is purely relative; viz, not supposing them to contain any intrinsic virtue, or excellency in themselves; but as barely bringing to our remembrance the objects they represent, for whose sake we respect them. Thus we are admonished by St. PAUL to bend our knees at the hearing of the sacred name of JESUS, *In the name of JESUS every knee shall bend, &c* †. Which, to the ears, is what the Crucifix may be reputed to be to the organ of sight, viz, an Image or memorial of our Blessed Lord, and of the ineffable blessings and mercies accruing to us from his death and passion. This relative honour Protestants themselves dare not refuse to that sacred name: they pay the like respect to their Churches, to the Communion table, and to the symbols of Bread and Wine. The same did the Jews heretofore to the Ark, to the Cherubims placed over it, and to the sanctuary, &c. And therefore to allow of a relative respect in

† Counc. Trent. Sess. 25. † Philip. ch. 2. v. 10.

these particular circumstances, and to judge it unwarrantable in other parrallel cases, is a conduct as unwarrantable as it is ridiculous; the result of passion, and of the spirit of Contradiction and Herefy.

Good Sense and Religion prompt us to respect, and affectionate every thing that has a relation to the objects of our love, or of our particular regard. Out of this consideration we respect the picture of our sovereign Prince, of our intimate Friend, and of our Parents; and therefore, why should the Ensigns of our Redemption, or the Effigy of God's most faithful and beloved servants, and distinguished favourites, *viz*, of his blessed Mother and the Saints, reminding us of their extraordinary virtues, and spurring us on to an imitation of them, be debarred the same tribute of honour and respect, or be excluded from our oratories of devotion? *Give to CÆSAR what is CÆSAR's, and what is GOD's to GOD* *.

THE inanimate part of the Creation was made use of by the Royal Prophet, to raise up his mind to the Divine Artificer—*The Heavens*, says he, *proclaim the Glory of God*, &c †. And if the handywork of man can be conducive to the same great end, where can be the incongruity of making use of it with this pious, religious, and rational intent?—certainly none at all. The inference is conclusive, and therefore the

* MATTH. ch. 22. v. 21. † Ps. 18.

Reformers not being able to make a direct reply to it, are necessitated to play their old shuffling, elusive game upon us, of taxing the Catholic practice with excesses and abuses.

SUCH they look upon, the actions of kneeling down to these pious Representations—of praying before them, and incensing them—But how ridiculously? For, dumb actions are certainly undetermined in themselves to any meaning, and are only directed to it by the inward intention: so, we kneel down to our Parents, as well as to Almighty God—we beg the blessing of one and the other; the material act is the same in both cases; but no one will be so absurd as to say, that our petition is specifically the same, or, that our kneeling to our Parents, like that to Almighty God, is an act of adoration. Words also, as well as actions, are equally liable, as I observed heretofore, ch. 6, Not. 2 to an equivocal acceptance. Thus the word *adore*, which the Catholic Church makes use of, in the worshipping of the Cross on Good Friday, is, in itself, equivocal, and directed by the Church, on this occasion, to her own meaning; which is, that in kissing the instrument of our Redemption, we should commemorate, with a grateful thanksgiving, that infinite mercy resulting from it. 'Tis said of JACOB, when he came before his son JOSEPH, unknown to him, and sitting as chief minister of king PHARAO, that out of respect to his Authority he *adored* the tip of his Staff—but

the sacred Text does not accuse him of Idolatry for that action; and the Catholic act of the adoration of the Cross, according to the intent of the Church, is as little liable to the censure, but by those who are disposed to cavil and dispute about nothing. Let, therefore, our squeamish Reformers only lay passion and prejudice aside, and they'll be sensible that their scruples are groundless, and the bulk of their objections to this article weak and trifling.

HOWEVER, it is further urged, that we impute *Miracles* to particular *Effigies* and places of devotion, and that we resort more to one than to another: a supposed indication of some intrinsic virtue believed to reside in such respective *Images* or *Places*.

IN order to answer this formidable objection, 'tis necessary to put the following previous question: Are these reputed miracles *fictitious* or *real*? If the first, we detest the fraud, as soon as discovered, as much as the most sanguine Protestant: If *real*, proved to be such and credibly attested; 'tis plain that we impute no more than what is fact and truth; that is, we believe Miracles to be wrought here and there, because they are wrought.

IN the mean while, acting rationally and coherently—wherever we see Almighty God operating in this supernatural manner, we justly look upon it as an intimation of his divine Will and pleasure, that he chuses to be honoured in these respective places rather than

in any other ; and wherever he annexes his extraordinary blessings, that it is reasonable, and even incumbent on us, there to seek for them.

Thus he chose, heretofore, to be honoured in the Temple of Hierusalem, preferably to any other synagogue or place of worship. Among the many pools of Judea, he was pleased to distinguish that of *Bethsaida*, by bestowing on it his peculiar benediction. The *brazen serpent* and *Moses's rod* operated the wonders which no other of the kind ever did ; for, our blessed Saviour tells us, that *the spirit of God breathes where it pleases* * ; and therefore what Almighty God has done, he may do again, in annexing to such particular places of devotion, or to such individual pious figures and representations, his peculiar blessing.

BUT, notwithstanding this, we are so far from believing any intrinsic virtue to be residing in the material Images themselves, that, as the brazen Serpent, when in process of time it became the occasion of offence and scandal, that is, an object of Divine Worship, was therefore broke to pieces by the King *HESEKIAH* ; so, if any Image or Oratory, never so famed for the Miracles wrought thereat, was to become the occasion of the like abuse, the Church would not hesitate a moment to destroy it ; or, by some other method, effectually to suppress such a su-

Jo. ch. 3. v. 8.

perfitious worship. For it is not, as has been often said, to an Effigy, Picture or Statue, that we impute the Miracle, or any inherent virtue, but to God alone, manifesting his omnipotent power by operations supernatural and miraculous, where and when he pleases ; making use of these means to confirm and heighten our trust in him—to inflame our devotion, and to promote a true and solid piety. Therefore, in short, the direct subject of enquiry in this case, is, Whether, at such places of devotion, there are sufficient and undoubted proofs of these supernatural operations ? (an investigation which surely may be as easily come at as of any matter of fact whatsoever)—these once appearing, in such a manner as to exclude all doubt or distrust of the truth of them, the Reformers have so little reason to take an occasion from thence of scandal or exception against the veneration of such emblems of piety, and places of devotion, that, on the contrary, they become a manifest token of the divine approbation—a sanction to our conduct, and a reproof to theirs.

Thus, as I hinted above, setting passion and prejudice aside, the Catholic practice of venerating the Saints Relicks and Images, is justifiable in itself from every head ; and the Reformers outcry against it equally unjustifiable, and highly injurious. For, plain Scripture, abstracting from circumstances entirely foreign to the Catholic cause, they have none to oppose to it ; but we have many precedents, as you
have

have seen above, from the Sacred Writings, in its behalf. Ancient practice, and the authority of the Church, are manifestly on our side; and reason and good sense, particularly pious sense, are avowedly subscribers to it, and its professed advocates: and, what clenches all our proofs, and puts the matter out of the reach of cavil and slander, is, that the Catholic practice has the seal of Heaven stamp'd upon it, the hand-writing of God himself; *to wit*, undeniable Miracles, to justify it.

THEREFORE, on summing up the whole, it appears that an attempt of a reformation of this particular article, was as vain and groundless, and as direct an imposition on their deluded Profelites, as any other part of that temerarious Undertaking.

CHAP.



C H A P. VIII.

Concerning the Article of Purgatory.

ARCH BISHOP TILLOTSON, discoursing on these words of the Apostle, 1. COR. c. 3. v. 15—*If a Man's works burn, he shall suffer loss ; but himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire*, makes a great wonder that Catholics can infer from them any insinuation of a Purgatory, or Middle State of Souls.

If the Doctor means that we build our belief of this article of the Catholic Faith on this single text, he is mistaken himself, or has misinformed his audience ; for, as we shall shew by and by, this doctrine is grounded on numerous other scriptural proofs. If he would say no more than that we think the Apostle, in this passage, plainly points at a place of temporal trial and satisfaction in the next life, we admit the charge ; and, luckily, we have authorities of no less credit than St. AMBROSE, or a cotemporary, and St. AUSTIN, on our side. The former, on the text in question, delivers himself as follows. “ But when he says, “ *yet so as by fire*, he shews, indeed, he shall “ be saved ; but yet shall suffer the punishment of fire ; that being purged by fire, he “ may be saved, and not tormented for ever,

as

“ as the Infidels are, with everlasting fire *.” Agreeably to the sense of this Father, St. AUGUSTIN speaks, in different places, as follows. “ With that *transitory fire*, whereof the Apostle said, *He shall be saved, yet so as by fire*, not capital, but little sins are purged †.” And again, elsewhere, he writes thus, “ Purge me, O Lord, in this Life; and make me such, as I shall not need that purifying fire—*He shall be saved, yet so as by fire*: and because it is said, *He shall be saved*, this fire is contemned; yet it will be more grievous than any thing that a man can suffer in this Life ‡.” So positive are these great lights of the Church in their opinion of the Apostle’s intimating, in the passage cited, a *Purgatory*, or middle state; tho’ the Doctor, and his associates, presume to dissent from them, thinking nothing less can be concluded from this Text. All he apprehends can be gathered from it, is, that the Apostle insinuates a *perilous state*, in which many *hazard their Souls*, and often *have a narrow escape from final perdition*. He therefore looks upon the expression no more than proverbial; and even TULLY himself, the Roman Orator, is flourished in, to strengthen the presumption; saying, that such a one got clear from a juridical sentence impending on him, as a man, surprized with his house on fire, escapes naked out of it, *Effugit hoc judicium tanquam nudus ab incendio*. But I am yet bold to think, that all these examples

* Comment in Ep. ad Cor. † Sermon. 41. de Sanctis.

‡ Enarr. in Psalm 37.

and allusions are too short of weight to ballance the aforecited uncontestable authorities in support of the Catholic interpretation of the Text. The Doctor's notion of a perilous state, which he would fain make the Apostle precaution his Disciples against in this passage, is as extraordinary as his strained construction of the Text itself, *to wit, The toleration of incestuous marriages—communicating in Idol Feasts—the doctrine of false teachers, &c, &c* : since it is strange indeed, that the Apostle should term these barely dangerous, when surely, in their own nature, if any thing can be so, they must be judged, by every man of any religious way of thinking, to be positively criminal, and directly destructive of salvation.

HE next, by way of parallel, huddles in every material point of the Catholic Faith, controverted between the Reformed Churches and us, as the article of *Infallibility, Repentance, Transubstantiation, Purgatory, &c*, according to his usual custom, misrepresenting each Article, and then drawing his own consequences from it thus misrepresented. And, whereas he must, to make his parallel run upon four feet, admit the profession of these respectice Articles to be *barely perilous*, not directly criminal; we must acknowledge the Doctor, in this respect extremely complaisant and merciful. But, however, we flatter ourselves not to stand in need of his tenderness or charity in our favour; call it by what name you please: And, as I have already obviated

obviated his objections to the other points; the Article of Purgatory, is what only remains at present to be canvassed, which I hope to make good in the following Section, upon the established foundation, on which all the other Articles of the Catholic Church have been settled thro' this Essay—*Scripture, Reason, and Antiquity.*

SECTION I.

Purgatory, and the Catholic practice of praying for the Dead, proved from Scripture, Reason and Antiquity.

BEFORE I proceed to our proofs of this Article of the Catholic Faith, I must premise, that I do not take upon me to contend for Terms or bare Words, and therefore, whether the word *Purgatory* is to be met with in the sacred writings or no, if the Thing meant by it, as understood by the Catholic Church, is there so plainly insinuated, as to be a natural sequel flowing from its premises, I shall then flatter myself, that we have a right to challenge Scripture on our side; and therefore, that Doctor TILLOTSON is disingenuous in disputing us this claim.

THE subsequent quotations, will, I apprehend, be sufficient to determine our difference in opinion, and I am ready to abide by their decision.

By

By Purgatory, then, the Catholic Church understands what it is defined and declared to be by the Council of Trent, viz, *That there is a Purgatory ; that is, a second place : and that the Souls therein detained, are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, but especially by the holy sacrifice of the Mass.* These, and no more, are the terms of a Catholic Communion, and our whole belief in this Article. And, therefore, as to the particular opinion, of the specific qualities of this place of trial, whether it consists of fire, or of some other entity ; and as to the circumstance of its duration, they being points foreign to the integrity of our Faith, we have nothing to say to them.

Now, the first part of the Council's declaration, of the existence of such a middle state of Souls, that is, that there is a *Purgatory*, is gathered from the following plain Insinuations ; some uttered by CHRIST himself, all of them delivered by the Inspired Writers.

FIRST, it is said, in sundry places of Holy Writ, both of the Old and New Testament, *That GOD will render to every one according to his works ;* and, indeed, this is no more than what is agreeable to our idea of a divine justice, and what we expect from it, according to the dictates and lights of natural Reason. This position therefore being settled, as a first principle not to be contested, comprises two things — *first, the diversity of man's deeds* — secondly,

ly, Almighty God's equity, in rewarding them according to their deserts.

AND, first, that mens deeds are very different, and their ends, consequently, equally different, is as evident as the diversity of their faces: some, for example, make their exit spotless and unblamable in the Divine sight: such are dying infants, who having been cleansed from original sin in the Lavatory of Baptism, were never capable of any further malice or guilt—such are, also, those, who finish their course by a most consummate act of the love of God, in sacrificing their lives for his sake by martyrdom—such, infine, are a few others, ('tis to be feared very few) whose lives are a perpetual Martyrdom of Penance, and one continual, as it were, uninterrupted act of the love of God. All these, therefore, being disengaged from the incumbrance of their Flesh, and released from the prison of mortality, having no guilt of sin unattoned for, to obstruct their flight to the heavenly mansions, are, no doubt, immediately admitted to the presence and enjoyment of God.

OTHERS there are, whose lives being a chain of sins, and a series of iniquity, and their ends impenitent, are as certainly doomed to perpetual Torments, and their destiny irrevocable. And, infine, it is also certain, that there are many others, who are neither so innocent or guiltless as those of the first class, nor yet so criminal

nal as the second; or, if they have been at any time frail delinquents, have had the grace to cancel the guilt of their frailties by a sincere Repentance, tho' they may not have made a condign satisfaction for them to the divine Justice; or yet may have other failings of not so deep a dye lying on their consciences—slips of inadvertency, not exclusive of the love of God and his divine friendship; but yet culpable in his pure eyes, (before which even the Heavens are unclean) and being unrepented of, must, one way or other, be attoned for. How then, judging by the strict Rules of equity, established by Almighty God himself, of rendering to every one, according to his deeds, are these Souls of the last character to be disposed of? The lot of those of the first class, is certainly too favourable and above their deserts: the punishment inflicted on impenitent Sinners, as much too severe, and absolutely incompatible with God's merciful declarations that, at whatsoever time the Sinner returns to him by a sincere repentance, he should meet with forgiveness. In the mean while, if the divine Mercy pleads for the repenting Sinner's pardon, his Justice sues for satisfaction; for it is further intimated, MATT. ch. 5. v. 25, 26, that there is a Prison, and whosoever is cast into it, can't be released 'till he has discharged his whole debt, *that is*, till he has given full satisfaction to the divine Justice. *Verily, I say unto thee, thou shalt not come out thence,*
'till

Will thou hast payed the last farthing *. It is also said in the Revelations, that *nothing unclean shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven* †. And, lastly, there is mention made of a Sin, *which shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, nor the world to come* ‡.

Now, what can all these Texts mean but a Middle State of Souls, or a place of temporary punishment? How can they be reconciled to common sense and reason by any other explanation? The Prison, mentioned in the first of the Texts just cited, from which there is, some time or other, a release, plainly insinuates this Middle State; because it is well known, that from the Infernal Prison, that is, from Hell, there is no Redemption; and it is agreeable to the laws of equity, afore settled, that there should be such a Third Place, in which the divine Justice might be fully satisfied.

If, again, *nothing unclean enters into Heaven* ||, as is declared in the second text, what must become of those, who make their exit out of this mortal life, with the stain of smaller faults not wiped off; that is, not repented of; or great ones repented of, but not fully attoned for? To Heaven, 'tis plain, they cannot in that condition have admittance: Hell they are not liable to; therefore a place of tem-

* MATT. ch. 5. v. 26. † Revel. ch. 21. v. 27.

‡ MATT. ch. 12. v. 32. || Revel. ch. 21. v. 27.

porary trial, where their Souls are to be purified and purged of all dross, to be fitted for Heaven, must, undoubtedly be their Lot. And, lastly, if there be a Sin, *which will neither be forgiven in this Life nor the next* *, we must conclude that there be others, which are forgiven in both one life and the other ; since, according to the avowed rule of speech, the exclusion of one Member of a *proposition* is an implicit affirmation of the other, *Exclusio unius est affirmatio alterius.*

FROM this concession, which cannot be refused, the following inferences are conclusive— In Heaven a forgiveness is not wanted, because nothing sinful has admittance there— From Hell, as has been said, there is no possible pardon or redemption : therefore, what the Church calls *Purgatory*, or a Middle State, must be the place of satisfaction, in the Texts aforesaid, alluded to : and, indeed, these sacred extracts are so plain, in terms, for the article in question, that it is surprising how even an Heretical Scepticism could mistake their meaning, or the most prejudiced judgment misconstrue them. But what overturns the opposition of our Adversaries to this Article, to all intents and purposes, is, their own weak defence of this bad Cause, *viz*, the insufficiency of the arguments they pretend to bring in support of it.

THEY object first, and chiefly, that CHRIST'S infinite merits and sufferings are a redundant

* MATT. ch. 12. v. 32.

satisfaction to the divine Justice for the whole debt of Sin—and who doubts it? They are an ample and superabundant satisfaction in themselves; but yet, in the present order and disposition of Providence, it is certain, that they are not effectually so to us, but in conjunction with some requisite and indispensable conditions, on our side, of God's Appointment: that is, the merits and sufferings of CHRIST, (as has been observed before, speaking of the Sacrament of Penance) radically and appretiatively cancel the guilt of Sin, but yet have not ordinarily their effect, but inasmuch as they are applied to us by such particular means or instruments of the Divine Institution, which towards cancelling the guilt, as has been said, are the Sacraments, accompanied by a sincere Repentance. In the failure or neglect of the position of these means, and of this repentance, *grievous sins* must be expiated, and the Divine Justice satisfied by the everlasting torments of Hell—*venial*, as has been prov'd, by a temporary punishment, which we call *Purgatory*. And also, with respect to greivous Sins, cancelled by Repentance as to their guilt; but not fully discharged, as to the debt of a temporary satisfaction; they are, by the same rules of equity, to be attoned for by the like temporary pains in the next life; unless this attonement is previously supplied in this, by an application of CHRIST's merits and sufferings,

ferings, thro' the power lodged in the Church for this effect and purpose, as will be shewn in the next Section.

It is urged again, by our adversaries, to be said in Holy Writ, that where the Tree falleth, whether to the south or north, *that there it shall lie* *. But, supposing this text to refer to the state of a Soul after death, which yet is not certain ; we agree that if the soul attains to the south of eternal bliss, or to the north of perdition, that its condition will be irrevocable ; yet this inviolable decree of Heaven, in these cases, cannot be looked on as a revocation of that other, equally indispensable, founded on the rules of strict justice, *of rendering to us according to our deeds* ; and therefore, supposing a man to quit this mortal life in a mean between the two extreams, neither worthy to be immediately admitted to the heavenly joys, nor yet deserving an eternal punishment ; the decree objected can be no bar to such an one being dealt with, by an equitable judge, according to his deserts, in those respective circumstances.

But was not the *good Thief*, say they, (who had been, in all appearance, a grievous sinner all his life, and effaced his guilt by a dying repentance) immediately translated to paradise, without passing thro' a fiery trial, or the furnace of a Purgatory ? He was—and if any

* Eccles. c. 11. v. 3.

one else should be favoured with the same extraordinary grace of a perfect repentance, to wit, his unparallel'd faith, and a consummate love of God, the happy fruits of the advantageous circumstances he was providentially placed in, of being sprinkled, as it were, with the blood of his dying Saviour, God and Man — I say, such an one, in the like singular and extraordinary circumstances, endued with such singular graces, might be favoured with the same extraordinary privilege.

No wonder that our blessed Redeemer, laying down his sacred life for the conversion and salvation of sinners, should, on this occasion, make a perfect conquest of this penitent sinner's heart, and carry him with him as a trophy of his victory, and as the first fruits of his Death and Passion, into the joys of Paradise.

BUT this extraordinary case, connected with such unparallel'd incidents, can, with no colour of reason, be brought as a precedent in behalf of the generality of mankind, steering within the ordinary course of providence; nor the condition of one and the other be considered in the same advantageous light. So visibly weak and unconvulsive, are the arguments of our adversaries, in their opposition to this article of the Catholic Faith. What concurs to discover the vanity of them beyond a reply, is, the cloud of authorities from univer-

sal

sal antiquity, which appear against them in support of the Catholic Cause. I'll content myself with selecting two or three of these venerable testimonies, out of a large list which are to be met with in other controvertists.

FIRST, TERTULLIAN, on that text of St. MATTHEW, *Agree with thine adversaries**, argues thus—"Seeing we understood that prison, which the Gospel demonstrates to be places below ; and the uttermost farthing we interpret every small fault, there to be punished by the delay of the resurrection ; no man can doubt but the soul may pay something in the places below †.

ST. JEROM, in his Comment on the same text, speaks thus—"This is that, which he says, thou shalt not go out of prison, till thou pay even thy little sins ‡.

ST. GREGORY NYSSEN has the following remarkable words—"A Man is cleansed either in this life, by prayer ; or, after his death, by the furnace of a purging fire — It is impossible to be partakers of the Divinity, unless purgatory fire doth cleanse the soul from the spots that stick to it ||.

THE great St. AUSTIN is not less plain and explicit on the subject—"It could not be said (urges this Father) that they are neither forgiven in this life, nor in the life to

* MATT. C. 5. v. 25, 26, &c. † TERT. lib. de Anim. c. 58. ‡ St. JEROM, Comm. in 5 MATT.

|| St. GREG. NYSS. Orat. pro Mort. prop. finem.

“ come, unless there were some, who, tho’
 “ they are not forgiven in this life, yet should
 “ in the life to come*.

BUT there is no stronger proof of the sense of Antiquity, concerning a *Middle State* of Souls, than their constant practice of offering up prayers for their relief; which is the second part of this article, afore declared by the Council of Trent; and therefore is incumbent on me to make good, they being correlative. For, if souls may be supposed to quit this life in such a state as not to be enemies of God, but the objects of his love and friendship, and yet for some small infidelities, or great ones unsatisfied for, deserve to be detained for a while from the enjoyment of this centre of their love and happiness; they are, consequently, as proper objects of our compassion and charity, as any of our fellow pilgrims in this earthly passage of life, lying under the scourge of divine Justice, whom we make no difficulty of interceding for, by our prayers—and, reciprocally, it being proved that it has been customary to offer such suffrages for souls departed, this becomes an irrefragable token that there is a *Middle State* (between Hell and Heaven) in which Souls are capable of benefitting from our prayers, and stand in need of them.

* St. AUSTIN, lib. de Civ. Dei. 21. c. 24.

AND yet it is evident, that this practice has been so general and ancient, that a person must be sceptic enough to question the truth of all history, and the most authentic records, to doubt of it. It is to be traced beyond the *Æra* of Christianity.

THE second book of *MACHABEES* is my Voucher, which, by the Catholic Church, is looked upon as canonical, and was received as such by the greatest Lights of the primitive times—*St. CYPRIAN*, *St. AUSTIN*, and others; as well as by several General Councils. And, tho' it should be allowed no more than an historical credit, yet it undoubtedly declares the practice of the Jewish Church, which particular our Blessed Saviour never found blamable, tho' he reprov'd that people for many other of their paternal traditions, as *JEREMY TAYLOR* judiciously observes.

FOR the satisfaction of my reader, I'll give him this learned Protestant Bishop's own words—“We find, says the Bishop, by the History of the *MACHABEES*, that the Jews did pray and make offerings for the dead (which also appears by other testimonies, and by their form of Prayers still extant, which they used in the Captivity)—Now it is very considerable that, since our blessed Saviour did reprove all the evil doctrines and traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees, and did argue concerning the Dead and the Resurrection, against the Sadducees, yet he
“spake

“ spake no word against this public practice,
 “ but left it as he found it ; which he, who
 “ came to declare to us all the will of his
 “ Father, would not have done, if it had not
 “ been innocent, pious, and full of charity *.

—So this Protestant Divine ; more ingenuous it seems, in this article, than Doctor TILLOTSON and many others of his violent brethren.

Now, this established practice among the Jews, of praying for the dead, is instanced in the following particular, in the second book of MACHABEES aforementioned ; *to wit*, that JUDAS MACHABEUS sent a sum of money to Jerusalem, to have Sacrifices offered for his soldiers slain in battle, “ thinking well and “ religiously, as the text says, of the Resur- “ rection ; and because he considered that those “ who slept with piety, had an excellent “ blessing reserved for them. *It is therefore “ an holy and wholesome cogitation to pray for “ the dead, that they may be loosed from their “ sins* †.

THAT the same practice, of praying for souls departed, was also adopted and universally used by the Church of CHRIST, is evident from innumerable testimonies of the Fathers, Liturgies, and public Offices of the Church, of all ages ; and was reputed one of the traditions received and handed down from the Apostles. TERTULLIAN expressly speaks

* Dr. TAYLOR, lib. 1. Proph. Sect. 20, numb. 11. p. 265.

† MACHAB. lib. 2. c. 12.

of it as an usual practice in his time——*we make, says he, anniversary oblations for the dead* *——and, in many other places, mentions it as an accepted, established custom, of the whole Church.

AMONG the opinions of AERIUS, (an Heretic of the primitive times) taxed by St. EPIPHANIUS as erroneous, this was one that he maintained——*The prayers and alms of the living offered up for the deceased, to be of no service to them.*

ST. CHRYSOSTOM asserts this article in many places of his works; but is so explicit in the following passage, as to deserve to be quoted at length——“The dead, says he, may be helped by prayers and supplications, and alms, and offerings; because they are not instituted in vain. *Let us therefore help them, for we have before us the expiatory Sacrifice of the World.* Therefore we ask confidently for All, and name them with the Martyrs, Confessors, and Priests. For we are All one body, tho’ some Members be brighter than others. And it may happen that we may obtain a total pardon for them, by prayers, oblations, and by the Saints, who are named with them †.

ST. CYRIL, Bishop of Hierusalem, more briefly than the former, but not less expressive, asserts the practice of Praying for the Dead,

* TERT. lib. de Coron. Mil. c. 13. † ST. CHRYS.

Hom. 41. in Ep. 1 ad Cor.

as follows—" Lastly, says he, we pray for
" all who die amongst us ; thinking it to be
" the greatest help that can be for their souls
" to have the holy and dreadful Sacrifice of
" the Altar offered in supplication for them*.

To omit, for brevity's sake, a cloud of o-
ther of these venerable authorities, I'll com-
pendiate them in the single testimony of St.
AUSTIN, who certainly must be allowed to
have spoke the sense of the whole Catholic
Church.

THIS great Doctor then, in one place, de-
livers himself, on this head, as follows—

" It is not to be denied, says he, but the
" souls of the dead are eased by the piety of
" their friends, when the *Sacrifice of the Me-*
" *diator is offered for them*, and alms given in
" the Church"†. In his 172 Serm. (olim 32)
de Verb. Apost. he directly, and almost in
identical words, asserts the same Doctrine—
elsewhere he gives the following reason for
the prayers of the living faithful being availa-
ble to the deceased ; because there are those
" whose lives have not been altogether so bad
" as not to be thought worthy of such a
" mercy, nor altogether so good as not to
" need such a mercy ‡". And, in a word,
what was the opinion of this great Doctor,
on this head, and the belief and practice of

* Catech. Myst. 5 p. 241. † St AUST. Enchirid. c.

109, 110. ‡ De Civ. Dei. lib. 21. c. 24.

the whole Church in his time, is plainly gathered from the dying request of his holy mother, St. MONICA, to him, *that she might be remembered at the Altar*—as he expressly relates it in his book of Confessions *.

THE practice of the Church, of praying for the Dead, appeared to some Protestant Authors, who were the most ingenuous and unprejudiced, so well supported from Antiquity, that, convicted from the evidence of truth, they could not help subscribing to it. We have had Doctor JEREMY TAYLOR's frank confession above.

THE Translators of Monsieur DU PIN acknowledge, that it was a custom among the primitive Christians (*ab Antiquo*) to pray for the Souls departed, in the dreadful mysteries. St. CHRYSOSTOM they own, plainly tells us, in his comment on the Philippians, Hom. 3. that it was decreed by the Apostles †.

Mr. THORNDIKE says, "The Practice of the Church in interceding for them (the dead) at the celebration of the Eucharist, is so general, and so ancient, that it cannot be thought to have come in upon Imposture, but that the same asperision will seem to take hold of the common Christianity ‡." This learned Protestant in practice, as well as Doctor BARROW, Bishop of St. Asaph, in their respective Epitaphs, beg the prayers of

* Lib. 9. conf. ch. 13. † DU PIN cent. 3.

‡ Just Weight and Measures, ch. 16. p. 106.

the faithful, that they may find mercy in the day of the Lord; rest, and a happy resurrection. Archbishop SHELDON and Bishop BLANDFORD's confession on this head, and acknowledging that it was their daily practice to pray for the dead, is attested by the Dutches of York, in the paper she left behind her, declaring the motives of her Conversion to the Catholic Faith.

Tho', not to be tedious, I pass by numerous other Protestant testimonies to the same effect, yet I cannot suppress the frank and open confession, on this head, of our modern impugner of the Miraculous Powers; who, tho' he does not, after the example of some of his Brethren, pay that deference to antiquity as to espouse their Tenets, on their credit; yet he fairly gives them up to us, and owns them to be all on our side——St. CHRYSOSTOM, AUSTIN, JEROME, as we have heard before, he taxes, by name, with sustaining several dogmas, rites, &c. which are entirely Popery; and quarrels particularly with St JEROME for his Defence, against VIGILANTIUS, of a Purgatory or Third Place; and praying for the dead †.

IN the mean while, after such undeniable proofs, for the being of a Purgatory, and the capacity of Souls there detained, to be helped by the suffrages of their living Friends; I say, after these proofs from Scripture and all Antiqui-

* Doctor MIDDLE. free Enquiry. Postscript.

ty so amply confessed by the learnedest, most ingenuous and moderate Protestants; with how much more front than sincerity, Doctor TILLOTSON and his adherents could aver, that we have *neither Scripture nor antiquity on our side*, I submit to the Judgment of the candid and impartial Reader.

SECTION II.

The Question of Indulgences fairly stated, and the meaning and intent of them set forth in their true light, and justified from the misrepresentations, ralleries and calumnies of our Adversaries.

THE Archbishop of Canterbury, whom I have singled out from the rest of our Adversaries, in the Controversy concerning Purgatory, and have followed step by step thro' the whole debate, This Prelate, I say, closes his opposition to this Article with a sneer as much beneath his double Character of an Archbishop and a Controvertist, as it is nothing to the purpose. But railing and ridicule is found to be a compendious way of refuting, is, however, often made to supply the dearth of better arguments. 'Tis the game the Doctor plays upon us in the present Debate: for, having first condemned us without Judge or Jury, in asserting confidently, without any Proof, *that Scripture and Antiqui-*

ty is against us; he next makes merry with our pretended defeat, telling his Audience, that still, the article of Purgatory, tho' destitute of every rational support, yet was of too lucrative a tendency to the Church of Rome, to be easily parted with: that, in this respect she did not, indeed, come under the lash of the Apostle, for *building straw and stubble on the foundation of Christianity*, having silver and gold for its superstructure.

I suppose the Doctor alludes, in this sneer, to the alms, which pious and well-disposed persons distribute, one way or other, towards the procuring of prayers for their deceased friends and relations: but if it be true (what I flatter myself to have evinced in the last Section) that the prayers of the living are available to the faithful departed, there can certainly be no more incongruity in bestowing temporal Charities in expectation of spiritual ones in behalf of our deceased friends, since the establishment of Christianity, than of JUDAS MACHABÆUS's sending a sum of money to the use of the Temple of Hierusalem heretofore, for the same charitable purpose. *He that serves the Altar*, says St. PAUL, *lives by the Altar* *—this supposed, the Doctor's jest, from this consideration, comes to nothing.

If he means to reflect on some possible abuses, which may have happen'd, some time or

* 1 Cor. c. 9. v. 13.

other, in the disposal of Indulgences ; (which he may look upon to be an appendix to the Article of Purgatory) waving, or even admitting the truth of the fact, which it is not my business, as a Controvertist, to examine into—I say, that it no ways affects the merits of the Cause, nor the validity of Indulgences, considered in their own intrinsic intent and meaning. There is nothing so holy but may be susceptible of abuses—the Sacraments are obnoxious to them ; the Hierarchy, and the sacred character of Priesthood, have been prostituted to simoniacal practices, without any prejudice to their divine institution : and therefore it is not what abuse may occasionally have been made of such an institution, which it is incumbent on us to answer for, but what it is in itself, which we are to regard. And with respect to the doctrine of Indulgences, which the Bishop aforesaid seems to flirt at, if abuse be separated from the right use of them—truth from falshood and slander, and reason to take place of prejudice, we shall find that this Doctrine is neither monstrous, nor odious and ridiculous, as our Reformers misrepresent it ; but a Christian Truth, deduced from Scripture—consonant to good sense, and supported by Antiquity.

- But first, to place this material point in its true light, I must premise, that the purport and meaning of an Indulgence, according to the sense and doctrine of the Catholic Church, is
nothing

nothing less than what our charitable Reformers misrepresent it, of being a *license to commit sin*, or an anticipated *pardon to sins* which hereafter may be committed. Therefore the true meaning and signification of Indulgences, and their efficacy, consists in this, *viz*, That it is a *release of the temporal penalty remaining due to sin*, after the guilt thereof, and the eternal punishment entailed on it, had been remitted in the Sacrament of Penance, or thro' a sincere and unfeigned Contrition. In order to make good this position, which is the whole sum of the Catholic Doctrine on this head, the following quæries or doubts are to be previously cleared up, and resolved.

FIRST, Whether there be not a temporal punishment remaining due to Sin, after the guilt has been cancelled by Repentance?

SECOND, Whether this temporary penalty is not redeemable by a further application of CHRIST's merits, as an ample fund, fit to atone for all our deficiencies?

THIRD, Where the power is lodged of applying this fund to us? Or whether the Church is not the Treasurer appointed by CHRIST for to dispose of it, according to our respective exigences?

FOURTH, What dispositions or conditions are required, on our side, to participate of the benefit of this Treasure?

THE

THE bare solution of these several doubts or quæries, will settle, at once, the point in debate; and as this solution is obvious, I have no need of trespassing on my reader's patience, in dwelling long upon it.

THE first quære, (Whether there be not a temporal penalty remaining due to sin, after the guilt has been cancelled by repentance) is answered in the affirmative, from many instances gathered from Holy Writ, and enforced from reason. We have a perpetual and undeniable proof of it in the case of *Original Sin*, which being first remitted, as to the guilt, in our first Parents, (as may be piously supposed) thro' their sincere repentance, yet entailed upon them a penalty as lasting as their lives; *to wit*, that they should earn their bread with the sweat of their brows, in finding the earth stubborn and unwilling to yield to the labour of their hands, and in meeting with a refractory disobedience to their commands from all the irrational part of the Creation; with a train of innumerable other woes, the fatal consequence of their forfeited Innocence.

THEIR unfortunate progeny have felt the same penal effects of this Sin ever since, even after the guilt or stain of it is wiped off by Baptism—The imbecillity of Infancy—sickness, and infinite infirmities annexed to that helpless state—The depravity of our minds, and strange propension to evil, felt in the years of maturity and discretion; and the variety of miseries

miseries continually hanging over our heads, and entailed on our very Being, are so many pregnant proofs of this fatal truth ; they being, manifestly, the penalty and consequence of that original disorder.

WE have another irrefragable instance of this truth, in the person of King DAVID, diversly afflicted by Almighty God for his grievous Sins of *Adultery* and *Murder*, after the guilt of them had been cancelled by a sincere Repentance. For, in the instant that this penitent Prince confessed his crimes, in a true humility and contrition of heart, the Prophet NATHAN declared, on the part of God, his forgiveness—*The Lord also*, said he, *has put by your sin* *. But, nevertheless, in the same breath, he proceeds to denounce to him the temporal vengeance of the Divine Justice, for the indignity offered to him by these grievous misdemeanors, in a train of woes which presently ensued ; as the *death of the child* unlawfully begotten—*domestic feuds and broils* ; with many other evils by the Prophet foretold †.

And this conduct of Almighty God is so agreeable to equity and reason, that Man, sinful as he is, in his acts of Judicature, frequently endeavours to copy after it ; it being usual for a Prince, or Judge, when out of an ostentation of clemency he remits any capital crime, to impose a temporary imprisonment—some public satisfaction, or a pecuniary mulct, in attonement for it.

* 2 Samuel ch. 12. † *ibid.* v. 10, 11, 12, 14.

THIS first doubt, therefore, being cleared up beyond contradiction, from the testimonies of Scripture, and the dictates of Reason ; and it being resolved that there is a temporary punishment due to sin, after the guilt thereof has been cancelled ; the next quære is, Whether this punishment is redeemable by any other fund, and the failure of a satisfactory penance on our parts to be supplied by some other means ? The answer to this question is so universally agreed to on all sides, that CHRIST's infinite merits and sufferings (whatsoever may be said of the redundant merits of the Saints) are, in themselves, fit to atone amply and fully all our deficiencies, that it will be needless for me to enlarge upon it, much more to take upon me to prove, what no one makes the least doubt of.

THE Reformers carry their estimation of CHRIST's merits and sufferings to such a mistaken pitch, as to suppose them absolutely satisfactory to the Divine Justice, and of immediate benefit to us, in cancelling the guilt and punishment due to sin, independently of every other condition than an internal Repentance ; whereas the Catholic Church thinks, that to these essential purposes it is further required, that they should be applied to us by the means and powers of CHRIST's appointment. The Sacraments, as we have shewn in another place *,

* Vid. Sacrament of Penance.

are these means of CHRIST's Institution, towards cancelling, the guilt of sin. And (which is an answer to the third quære) the Church herself we hold to be the Treasurer of these Mercies, and vested with the powers of distributing them amongst her penitent Children (which is what we call *Indulgences*) for the other desirable effect, *to wit*, of paying off the remaining satisfaction due to the Divine Justice for Sin, after the guilt of it is released and forgiven.

THE investiture of this power in the Church, we apprehend to be evident from the delivery CHRIST made to her of the Keys, without limitation or restriction, in the following emphatic Commission: "I will give unto thee (PETER) the Keys of the kingdom of Heaven; and *whatsoever* thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven; and *whatsoever* thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in Heaven †."

THE Power here given, of *binding* and *releasing*, is full and illimited, without distinction of guilt or punishment: and, therefore, pursuant to this Commission in full, and an illimited power vested in the Church, we find that she, from the establishment of Christianity, exercised it from time to time, according to the exigency of causes and circumstances, in discharging Penitents (whenever there was just occasion for

† MATT. ch. 16. v. 19.

it) from part of their penance due for their sins; as is witnessed by TERTULLIAN, St. CYPRIAN, and other primitive Fathers. And in this, as to the method and practice of the thing, she only copied after the example of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, who remitted to the Incestuous Corinthian part of the Penance laid upon him: both St. PAUL, on that occasion, (as he expressly mentions) and the Church, now, and at all times, doing it *in the person of CHRIST* ‡; that is, by virtue of the keys or commission received from him.

BUT, lest our Adversaries may ignorantly imagine, or disingenuously misrepresent the Church to make a wanton use of this power, she is intrusted with, it is to be observed, that, according to the Catholic Doctrine in this point, she never does exercise this Authority, delegated to her, without just cause; or if she did, that it would not be thought to be available to us, or ratified in Heaven.

It is moreover to be known, that, on the part of him, on whom this favour is bestowed, there are many conditions requisite, in order to reap any benefit from it; as first, that he be absolutely in the state of Grace, and his heart so wholly disengaged from Sin, as to have no actual affection or attachment to it; to which end it is always recommended and prerequisite, that he cleanses his soul from this infection by

‡ 2 Cor. ch. 2. v. 10.

a worthy participation of the Sacraments of *Confession* and *Communion*—with these essential preparations, are also usually joined Fasting, Alms, Prayer, and other penitential works.

So far, then, is the Doctrine of *Indulgences* from being a licence to commit Sin, or an anticipated forgiveness of future sins, (as is maliciously misrepresented by our Adversaries) that, as I just said, it presupposes the Soul to be purified from All actual Sins that are grievous, as being destructive of the divine Grace; and even precludes every inclination and affection to sin in itself; and thereby becomes rather a means of preventing a future relapse, than an encouragement to it.

THO' I have been brief on the subject of Indulgences, yet I flatter myself that the little I have offered in defense of them, will be judged as much as the matter requires—that it is sufficient to clear them from the cavils and ralleries of Doctor TILLOTSON and his associates; and that I have made good the promise I gave, of shewing it to be a Doctrine so far from being odious and monstrous, as they misrepresent it, that it is, on the contrary, an Apostolic Truth, deduced from Scripture, warranted by Antiquity, and perfectly consonant to good sense and reason.



C H A P. IX.

The Catholic Church is as pure in her morals as she is sound in Faith; that is, she is as Holy as she is Orthodox: and therefore, the pretended Reformation is also, from this head, unjustifiable.

IF I had taken upon me to go through a body of Controversy, it might have been expected that I should now, or even before this, have spoke distinctly and separately, concerning the principal Attributes or Marks of the Church; to wit, as she is *One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, &c.* But this would have led me beyond the Bounds I prescribed to myself in the Title of this Essay, by which I professed to treat precisely of the *Merits* of the Reformation; or merely to enquire into the grounds of the pretence that was pleaded for a Reform, and how this pretence has been answered—and in consequence thereto, to consider the Church as far, and no further than she became its object.

THE Church, being viewed in this light, there are only two essential points, which directly come within our notice—her *integrity of Faith*, and the *purity of her Morals*; that is, *whether she is orthodox, and whether she is Holy?*

THESE

THESE are, indeed, so comprehensive, as to include, in some degree, her *unity*, and every other attribute ; and therefore has obliged me, occasionally, to touch on some of them already, and may yet, to add more hereafter, as the matter then in hand shall require. But, I say, the *orthodoxy* of the Church, and her *sanctity*, are the only points I undertook to treat of *ex professo*, because they are the points in which the late Innovators must pretend to have found her reprobable, in order to give the least colour of Justice to their separation from her.

THEY, in fact, endeavoured, as we have seen, to bring the integrity of her Faith in question, by impeaching her of several pretended Errors ; the principal whereof we have examined in the foregoing Controversies, and tried at the Tribunal, they themselves make choice of and appeal to—Scripture, in its plain and obvious sense. And, I flatter myself, the defence we have made, may be reputed, by an unprejudiced Judge, to be sufficient to clear her of this Indictment.

THE purity of her Morals is the point next incumbent on us to enquire into, which we are ready to do, and to bring to the same Bar : for the whole System of Christian Morality is, no doubt, compiled and comprehended within the New Testament. Taking, then, the New Testament for our umpire and guide, I must observe, that it points out to us two marks, by which the Church's Holiness is to be assuredly

ly known ; the one signifying the means leading to it, and by which it is to be directly attained ; the other supposing it, and plainly shewing it to be already acquired and fully possessed. And therefore the Church, which has these Marks, must indisputably be admitted to be Holy ; not only, as being in the way to *Holiness*, but also, as being *actually Holy*.

THE first of these Marks, signifying the means to *Holiness*, is a treasury of certain extraordinary virtues, or a System of Morality lodged in the Church, called the *Evangelical Counsels* ; which contain the summit of perfection ; *to wit*, *perpetual chastity*, or *celibacy* ; *voluntary poverty* ; *self-denial*——the several degrees of *humility*, with its supererogatory acts, and the rest——virtues most assuredly recommended in the Gospel, and other parts of the New Testament.

THE Mark of the second sort, supposing and indicating a previous *Holiness* already acquired ; and not only holiness, but integrity of Faith to be inherent to the Church possessed of this Mark ; is the *Power of Miracles* : because Miracles are the Seal or hand-writing of God himself, who cannot set his hand to any thing but what is sanctity and truth.

Now which Church has the best claim to these several marks of *Holiness*, the Catholic or the Reformed, is the present question ; and on the issue of it depends which Church is to

be reputed most pure in her Morals, most conformable to the Gospel Rule, or, in a Word, Which is the Holy Church of CHRIST.

SECTION I.

The Catholic Church has all the Marks or Signs of being possessed of the means leading to Holiness, according to the Standard of the Gospel; which the Reformed Churches neither have, nor dare pretend to.

OUR blessed Saviour, before he quite abolished the Mosaic Law, to make room for the more perfect Law of Grace, gradually prepared his Disciples for this great event, by raising in their minds a sublime idea of the dignity of the latter, and of the distinguished superiority it had over the former. This superiority did not barely consist in the Institution of the Sacraments of the new Law, (which no doubt was a very essential difference) but also in the excellency of its Morals—in a system of a perfecter discipline, and in a collection and recommendation of more eminent virtues. In a word, the Divine Precepts were equal to both Laws; but the Evangelical Counsels, peculiar to the Law of Grace, comprehended a degree of perfection much exceeding what is to be met with in the Law of MOSES. This excellency of Morals, in conjunction with the Sacraments, was, as I just said, the specific difference of one Law from the

the other ; and the same continues to be the Characteristic of the true Church of CHRIST, and its distinction from all other Sects and Congregations whatsoever.

BUT I must observe, that, when I speak of the Evangelical Counsels as a part of the new Law, and consequently, as a *Characteristic*, in some measure, of the *true Church* of CHRIST, I would not be understood to mean, that they affect, indiscriminately, each member of the Church ; or that it is incumbent on every individual to observe All, or any one of the Evangelical Counsels, in the same degree of perfection ; because, as St. PAUL tells us, *every one has his own proper gift—one so, another so* *.

BUT, what I aver, is, that the Church is the repository of these spiritual Treasures ; where, and no where else, they are to be met with : that is, I say, that the Church, acting by the spirit of the Gospel, recommends and encourages the practice of these means to perfection—that, in effect, there are many within her pales, who, by the help of God, continually reduce them into practice ; and that this is one of the marks of the Church's Holiness ; and, consequently, of being the true Church of CHRIST, by possessing these means leading to Holiness. And, lastly, I aver this mark of

* 1 Cor. ch. 7. v. 7.

Holiness to be proper and peculiar to the ROMAN CATHOLIC Church ; and, that the Reformed Churches have no pretensions to it.

IN order to make good this last assertion, which is the principal of all, and comprises the rest, I beg leave to run thro' the list of the Evangelical Virtues and Counsels above mentioned ; applying them, as we go along, to both Churches, from which it will be clear which Church lays to them the best claim.

WITHIN this list, the perfection of the Virtue of *Humility* merits to appear at the head, as the foundation of all the rest. Now, that our Blessed Saviour recommends, both by word and example, the perfection of this divine Virtue to all his followers, is so evident, that a man must be disposed to contest the inspiration of the Scriptures, to entertain the least doubt of it. He recommends it by example, when, being the GOD of Majesty, *he debased himself so low*, as St. PAUL expresses it, *as to take upon him the figure and habit of a servant**, in his Incarnation ; when he afterwards subjected himself, for the best part of his mortal passage here on earth, to his Mother, according to the Flesh, and to his reputed Father——when his whole life was one continual act, and perfect model, of the profoundest Humility ; and he lastly concluded it by a consummate exercise of Humility, in submitting to a most ignomi-

* Phil. c. 2. v. 7.

minious death, the death of the Cross—*He humbled himself*, says the aforesaid Apostle, *becoming obedient to Death, even the death of the Cross* *.

AND the Blessed Virgin, (the faithful Copy of this divine Original) as we have seen before, when raised to the dignity of being his Mother, would deem herself no better than his Handmaid—*Behold*, says she, *the Handmaid of my Lord*.

OUR blessed Lord recommends the perfection of this Evangelical Virtue in words, by his repeated exhortations to his Disciples to the practice of it; bidding him, that would be great amongst them, to appear as the least—him that aspired to be Lord and Master, to deport himself as the servant; declaring the meek and humble of heart, to be truly blessed: and reproving the Scribes and Pharisees for their exorbitant pride. I refer the Reader to the sacred records themselves for numerous other documents of the profoundest humility. The Counsel, therefore, is certain; but now, which Church adopts it chiefly into Practice, the *Catholic* or *Reformed*, is to be our next enquiry.

AND, first, I dare be positive that the Reformation can lay no claim to this Queen of Virtues, if either its origin, the principles it is grounded upon, or the characters of the Authors

* Phil ch. 2, v. 8.

of it, are to be consulted. For, with regard to the latter, to single out LUTHER, the capital Reformer, for an instance; it is well known that he was so little celebrated for his *humility* and *meekness*, that the opposite vices of *pride*, *self-esteem*, and *insolence*, are acknowledged, from the undoubted records of the times, to have been his predominant passions. He set out by an open Rebellion against his lawful Superiors; he dared to oppose his own private opinions against the universal belief of the Church; that is, of the whole Catholic World; as he boasted himself, *primo solus eram!*

THERE was no degree of persons; no characters so sacred, whether Prelates, Cardinals, Popes, or Monarchs, but became the objects of his insults: even the deceased were not spared, nor did the greatest Lights of the Church escape his scorn and contempt. *Tho', says he, a thousand CYPRIANS, or a thousand AUSTINS stood against me, I care not a rush—I don't concern myself what AMBROSE, AUSTIN, the Councils or practice of Ages say**. Even his own Disciples felt the effects of his arrogance, and complained of his overbearing temper. And, infine, the character his Panigyrist, Archbishop TILLOTSON, gives him, of a *bold, rough Man*, little corresponds to the humility and meekness CHRIST recommends to his Disciples.

* LUTH. contr. Reg. Angl. To. 2. Fol. 347.

Now, tho' his fellow Reformers, or his Adherents, ever since, may not have gone all his lengths of a barefaced insolence, it does not appear that they relent of his spirit, in the main—that they are less self-opiniative, or more docile and submissive to their lawful superiors appointed by CHRIST.

THE fundamental principle of the Reformation, by which private judgment is made the Umpire of all Religious Controversies, is a direct contradiction to the humble captivating of our understanding, in obedience to Faith, required by the Gospel Rule. And, in short, Humility is a virtue so little celebrated, or encouraged within the Reformed Churches, that, abstracting from a few short persuasives to it, in the Book entitled *The whole duty of Man*, I don't know whether the Reformers can produce a single Essay treating professedly of this virtue, or tending to display its excellency, and to enforce its practice: whereas, on the other hand, within the pales of the Catholic Church, the Tracts published on this divine subject are innumerable; wherein the Merits of humility are duly weighed, and the several degrees of it explained—where it is set before us in all its shapes, and its exercise strongly inculcated. And, effectually, the Conduct of the Sons of the Catholic Church is known to be the very reverse of the Reforming Members; by paying a submissive, indefinite obedience to the

the Church and its Pastors, which is interpreted and ridiculed, by our Adversaries, as a meaness of Spirit. The voluntary humiliations of particulars, engaging themselves by vow, to a special obedience to their respective superiors, in the several Religious Institutes within the Catholic Church, are equally known, and are so many undeniable Proofs, that we adopt this Evangelical Council, both in Theory and Practice. Other exercises of the most heroic Humility, both external and internal, are, what they are continually trained up to, in these Schools of Religious Perfection. Here they are taught to spurn the world, with its follies; to prefer the humility of the Gospel, to pompous vanity; contempt to honours; and, if they meet with insults and affronts, not only to bear them patiently, but to *rejoice thereat* with the Apostles; *that they are deemed worthy to suffer contumely for CHRIST's sake.*

If virtue, wit, learning, or any endowments of nature or grace have gained them a great name, they are instructed not to be elated therewith, but to depress themselves the lower in their own Judgments, the higher they may be raised in the opinion of others: in imitation of the Mother of God, the most dignified creature that ever was, and yet the most humble. And, lastly, they are reminded of what our Blessed Saviour has admonished us, after we have done All that God or Man, seemingly, may expect from us, and may flatter our-

selves that we have reason to be satisfied with our own performances; yet still, with regard to Almighty God, that we are *unprofitable Servants*.

THESE are the principles of solid Humility, which the Catholic Church constantly instills into her Children, and which, by the Grace of GOD, she has the comfort of seeing, by some or others, daily brought into Practice; and therefore is an undoubted proof that she gives an effectual attention to that Evangelical Virtue in its highest degree of perfection; which the Reformers so manifestly neglect, and make so little account of.

PERPETUAL *Virginity* is another Evangelical Counsel, properly such, which our Adversaries cannot say but that our Blessed Saviour has singularly honoured; first in his own sacred Humanity, being the model of *Purity*, and *Purity* itself—secondly, by making choice of a *Virgin* for his *Mother*—thirdly, by picking out, from amongst his Disciples, a *Virgin* for his favourite; so that, tho' they All had a great share of his Love, yet St. JOHN, for his *purity*, as St. JEROM observes, was loved preferably to the rest; and was therefore stiled, by excellency, *the beloved Disciple*. And it is, moreover, remarkable, that whilst our Blessed Lord suffered his divine person to be reviled, slandered and blasphemed, by his virulent enemies in every other point, he never
would

would permit them to cast the least blemish upon his unspotted purity.

SUCH, then, being our Blessed Lord's distinguished esteem for the virtue of *Virginity*, and the extraordinary complacency he took in his *Virgin Mother* and *Virgin Disciple*, it cannot be doubted but every other *Virgin* must be singularly agreeable to him; that is, All those, who embrace upon earth a virtue which resembles them to the Inhabitants of Heaven, where our blessed Saviour tells us, that there will be no intercourse of mariages—they *shall neither marry, says he, nor be married* *. And, in effect, he recommends this Angelical State, and applauds their choice who are so happy as to take to it; when he says, that there are those, *who become Eunuchs for the Kingdom of God* †; tho' he insinuates, at the same time, that the sublime meaning of this Counsel was above the reach of carnal understanding—*All do not take this word* ‡. But St. PAUL, the faithful interpreter of his blessed Master's doctrine, fully explains it, in inculcating, expressly, the profession of Virginity. *Concerning Virgins, says he, a Commandment of our Lord I have not, but counsel I give* (that is, it is my advice) *Art thou loose from a wife? seek not a wife* ||: And, as an encouragement to this generous Undertaking, he proposes his own example; wishing all to be

* MATT. ch. 22. v. 30. † *ibid.* ch. 19. v. 12. ‡ *ibid.* ch. 19. v. 11. || 1 Cor. ch. 7. v. 25, 27.

as he was ; that is, to lead a single Life——
But, I say to the unmarried and to widows, it is good for them, if they so abide, even as I.*

Now the Catholic Church dares to boast of inheriting this Apostle's spirit, and of literally adopting his Counsel into practice ; or rather, the Counsel of CHRIST, repeated by him——first, by obliging the Clergy to a life of celibacy——secondly, by encouraging and confirming those numerous religious institutes, in which the state of Virginity is professed by solemn vow——the perfection of it aspired to ; and, by the grace of God, faithfully complied with, by many thousands of virtuous Souls ; of which number some, from time to time, have had the resolution to seal thir profession of Virginity with the effusion of their blood, rather than part with the inestimable Treasure.

BUT, on the other hand, I may venture to say, that the Abettors of the Reformation will neither take it in dudgeon, nor as any aspersi^on cast upon them, to aver, that they do not practise this Evangelical Counsel, nor give any encouragement to the practice of it. 'Tis notorious that the generality of them are of the number of those our blessed Saviour points at, who think it an *unintelligible saying*, and above the strength of human weakness ; and they presume to censure the Catholic Church, for the respective obligations of a single Life,

1 Cor. ch. 7. v. 8.

which

which she has annexed to particular states and professions within her pales.

It is equally certain, that the ringleading Reformers were as notorious for their incontinency, as for their exorbitant pride and arrogance. Each one associated to himself his *female mate* to further on the Evangelical work he had taken in hand: LUTHER had his *faithful KATE*; tho' both one and other were engaged by Vow to a single life: The rest of the new Gospellers took care, by their Leader's example, to be provided each one with his Doxy; and, even to this Day, if any of ours, degenerating from the sanctity of his character, falls off from us to go over to them, a wife, certainly, proves to be the case; liberty and concupiscence the spring and motive of their conscientious conversion; which has brought it into a proverbial observation, as ludicrous as it is true, that, on these occasions they always *carry double*. In fine, if Facts are to be relied on, the Reformation is averse from the profession of virginity and a single life, both in principle and practice; and the Catholic Church, in both these respects, is as conspicuously an Advocate for, and Abettor of this Evangelical Counsel.

AMONGST the means to salvation, a disengagement of our hearts and affections from the things of this world, that they may be more at liberty to attend to the concerns of the other, is essentially one of them; *to wit,*

304 *The Catholic Church is possessed of*

a means always conducive to it, and in many cases absolutely necessary.

AN inordinate attachment to creatures, is incompatible with the love of God above all things; there is no raising our heart to Heaven while it is fixed on the Earth: *No one*, says our blessed Saviour, *can serve two masters* *. The Philistines might as well have associated Dagon and the Ark on the same Altar, as we can pretend to serve God and follow the world in its corrupt principles and maxims. In this case, therefore, there is an indispensable obligation of renouncing the world first, for to become in any degree acceptable to God.

BUT there is also a moderate use of creatures, which is allowable in itself, and not absolutely incompatible with our duty to God. Such is a well regulated enjoyment of innocent amusements; a temperate fruition of lawful pleasures, not forbid by the Commandments; the possession of worldly goods and riches, saving a due regard to the obligations of charity, and a Christian œconomy in the expending of them.

BUT tho', I say, the possession of these gifts of providence be lawful in itself, and no invincible obstacle to our eternal Salvation; yet they cannot but be deemed an incumbrance to us in our spiritual career, as many cloaths

* LUKE ch. 16. v. 13.

are to a courser running a race; and therefore we should, certainly, be more at liberty by casting them off; that is, we should thereby be able to serve God with less interruption, and meet with fewer rubs in our way to perfection. And to do this, is clearly the Counsel our blessed Saviour gives us, in several parts of the Gospel.

I'LL produce one proof for all, which is, his advice to the young Rich man, applying to him to be guided into the direct road to the Kingdom of Heaven. Our blessed Lord, in compliance with his desires, first points out to him Duties of obligation—*keep*, says he, *the Commandments*. But, on the young man's saying he had discharged this obligation from his youth, he counsels him next to what was perfect, *If you'll be perfect*, says he, *go sell all you have, and give it to the poor and follow me* *.

IT was this perfect disinterestedness, in effect and affection, which the Apostles espousing, gave St. PETER the confidence of saying to our blessed Saviour, *Behold, we have left all things and followed thee; what therefore will be for us* †.

AND we gather from the Acts of the Apostles, that they pursued this disinterested conduct afterwards, being divested of all property, and *having nothing* ‡, as St. PAUL avers, they could call their own, but every thing in common.

* MATT. ch. 19. v. 21. † *ibid.* v. 27. ‡ 2 Cor. ch. 6. v. 10.

306 *The Catholic Church is possessed of*

THIS Course, which the Apostles entered upon, appears also to have been an engagement of the most sacred nature; because the origin of JUDAS's shameful apostacy is dated from a breach of it, by appropriating to himself what was allotted for the use of the Community; which is insinuated by the Evangelist's saying *He was a thief, and having the purse, carried what was in it**—for, if he had not been guilty of misapplication, his carrying the purse could not throw him under that imputation. The exemplar Judgment which fell upon ANNANIAS and SAPHIRA, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, was apparently in punishment of a similar infidelity.

Now, to come to the application of the premises, I say, that within the pales of the Catholic Church, this Evangelical Counsel is literally observed, and the apostolical example strictly copied by numbers of her Children: witness the sundry Religious Institutes, in which a total disinterestedness is professed—their property is given up by vow, and All things are possessed in common, according to the apostolic spirit. Witness the many generous Souls, (members of the Catholic Church) who are seen to leave Father and Mother, their dearest friends, their native home, and a plentiful fortune, in exchange for voluntary poverty and retirement; in order to be more at liberty to

* JOHN ch. 12. v. 6.

attend to the service of God and their own salvation.

AND I presume to say, that the like examples of a perfect disinterestedness, are so far from being to be met with, within the Reformed Churches, that, on the contrary, what is practiced by us in this kind, is become the usual topick of raillery and ridicule to them; or, at best, attracts their pity on us, as a set of mistaken, deluded zealots.

To forfeit a birth-right inheritance, or the plentiful gifts of providence, is by no means according to the plan of the Reformation. Even the Ecclesiastical state, amongst them, is equally a stranger to such renunciations, and scarce a bar to any pleasures or possessions, compatible with a secular condition: and therefore, if such as engage in it, should be equally worldly-minded as seculars themselves—If an easy living, with a large income annexed to it, should have more persuasive attractives, and a more prevailing bias on their choice, than a burthensome Curacy, with slender profits, it cannot be admired at. And tho' they may think that, as to the capacity of enjoying temporal possessions, they can retort the charge upon the Clergy of the Catholic Church; it is yet certain, that even these lie under many restrictions and obligations, which the Reformers have taken care wholly to dispense themselves with, and to throw off their shoulders.

BESIDES

BESIDES that, as I premised in the beginning, the Evangelical Counsels are not obligatory, but only the means to a greater good, and a help to perfection; and in that light advisable and eligible, but not equally convenient for all states and conditions; much less binding in every degree of them, and in their full extent.

IT is sufficient, for my present purpose, to have evinced that the Catholic Church professes the strictest veneration for these means to Holiness, the Evangelical Counsels; by approving and inculcating their practice; and that, with respect to the particular Counsel in question, of a *total disinterestedness*, she has many among her Children, who are courageous enough to put it into execution, in the highest degree of Perfection. It is equally certain that the Reformed Churches are wholly destitute of the like testimonies of their regard for the Evangelical Counsels in general, and for this we have just spoke of in particular, as well as for that which ensues.

As the sum of our strict obligation, with regard to the Law of God, consists of two points—to *avoid evil*, and to *do good*: So the perfection of the Law is composed of two branches, to *renounce the world*, and to *deny ourselves*. By the first, we give up our right to temporal goods—by the second we give up our will and affection to the same. By the one we abstain from lawful pleasures—

by

by the other we embrace their contrary mortifications. And that this is a matter of Evangelical Counsel, is indisputable. *Deny yourself, take up your Cross, and follow me **, is what our blessed Saviour is continually inculcating in almost every chapter of the Gospel : and how little heeded by the Reformers, is plain from the whole system of their pretended Evangelical Work, calculated for ease and luxury, to get to Heaven with as little pains as possible, and without putting any great restraint on their passions and inclinations, for this desirable and only necessary end.

For instance, works of supererogation are, by them, absolutely discountenanced, and the doctrine of self-merit exploded—the ancient Fasts of the Church wholly discarded ; and the spirit of Penance, preached up by St. JOHN BAPTIST, confirmed by our Blessed Saviour afterwards, and repeated and inculcated over and over again by the Apostles, is lost among them, and quite laid aside.

THE Catholic Church, on the contrary, manifestly keeps up the self-denying spirit of the Gospel, by her regular Fasts, enjoined to all her faithful—by advising and encouraging acts of Mortification and self-abnegation in every shape—by her incessant exhortations to Repentance (which, thro' the blessing of God, prove successful in reclaiming numbers from

* MATT. C. 16. V. 24.

evil courses to a penitential life).—but, chiefly, by the many nurseries of Virtue she continually cultivates, which are fruitful of Saints of every class, and of examples of the perfectest self-denial.

Now, for our adversaries to oppose to these unquestionable instances of solid Virtue, the dissolute behaviour of a few, not living up to the sanctity of their profession; what else can it prove, than that there is no Institution so holy but is capable of being abused, and has been abused. Yet this still can be of no prejudice to the merits of the Institution itself, nor to those who *do* live conformably to it. There was a JUDAS in the College of Apostles, without any detriment to the *Apostolic Calling* — There are many, bearing the name of *Christians*, who live worse than *Heathens*; yet *Christianity* does not cease to be holy: nor, will the Catholic Church cease any more to be orthodox in her Faith, and pure in her Morals, because she has some members wavering or corrupt in their belief, and dissolute in their manners; who deserve to be removed from her communion. To such as these the Reformation owes its first rise and establishment; and none but such ever desert us, since that Religious Revolution, to incorporate with them.

BUT, in spite of all these accidental scandals, it will always be true that the Catholic Church is found in her Faith, and pure in her Morals;

Morals ; and that she pays the profoundest regard to the Evangelical Counsels, both in theory and practice. Of these consists the system of her discipline, and the beauty of her oeconomy. And they being the means to Holiness, appointed by CHRIST himself, it cannot be questioned but she, being possessed of them, is that Church established by him, (the repository of all his spiritual Treasures) *Catholic, Orthodox and Holy*.

ON the other hand, tho' the Reformers, by virtue of their arrogated title, ought to have had these essential points at heart, and to have made it their business to restore integrity of Faith, and purity of Morals, supposed to have gone to decay ; yet I venture to say, from the undeniable proofs I have produced in the foregoing Controversies, that the contrary fatal consequences have attended their presumptuous Undertaking ; that is, that they have sapped the very foundation of Religion, both in its Doctrine and Morals, under the spacious pretence of re-establishing it ; and therefore must be reputed to be destitute of these essential Marks or Characteristics, of being CHRIST'S Church——*Catholic, Orthodox, and Holy*.

HERE it may be thought that I might very well drop my pen on this subject ; but I cannot forbear subjoining a hint of another material consideration, which has a relation to what has gone before, as a mark of the Church's
Holiness,

Holiness. The point I mean is a branch of the law of Charity, and that a principal one; *to wit*, The zeal of Souls.

THE conversion of Souls, that is, the bringing them to the knowledge of Truth, to the embracing it, and, in consequence thereto, to a repentance for Sin, was the continual object of our blessed Lord's most ardent wishes, prayers, and labours on earth; as it was the motive and end of all the circumstances of his mysterious Incarnation, Passion, and Death: and it was the errand on which the Apostles were afterwards dispersed to the distant parts of the globe—*Go*, said our blessed Lord to them, *teach all Nations; baptising them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, &c.* *

THE occasion of this embassy continually subsists, *to wit*, as long as there are Infidels in the World, or any who are ignorant of the true way to Salvation; and therefore the Catholic Church has, for a succession of ages, from the Apostles time till now, cherished their spirit. Whole Countries and Nations, brought, from time to time, under the yoke of CHRIST, thro' the indefatigable labours of her Missionaries, are undeniable testimonies of her constant and unwearied zeal of Souls.

BUT I defy the Reformers on their side, to produce an Instance of one single Town or Village, ever gained by them, or attempted to

* MATT. ch. 28. v. 19.

be gained, by any other means than by the force of law, and dint of authority. And therefore, whereas the Catholic Church has indisputably inherited this apostolic spirit, (which the Reformers are wholly strangers to) so it has pleased Almighty God, from time to time, to stamp upon it the visible marks of his sanction and approbation; by annexing to the Church the Miraculous Powers, as an aid to her apostolic labours; as credentials to her Commission, and as a manifest token or characteristic of her being his beloved spouse, the Church by him established—not only as being the repository of the means leading to Holiness, but also, as being actually Holy.

SECTION II.

The Catholic Church can prove her claim to the Miraculous Powers; the Reformed Churches have disclaimed them: therefore she has this assured mark of her Orthodoxy and actual Holiness, which they are destitute of.

WHEN we attribute to the Catholic Church the Miraculous Powers, we would not be thought to insinuate the existence of an inherent quality or cause, operative at will of its effect (in the manner the Priestly character, being inseparable from the person vested with it, capacitates him, at all times, to exercise his respective functions)—but, we

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mean,

mean, a gratuitous and occasional gift, providentially conferred by Almighty God on his Church, according to the respective exigency of circumstances.

THE Apostles were certainly under these circumstances, when they entered upon their apostolic ministry. For, to go about to persuade the Jews, that the Man, whom they had just before put to an ignominious death, as a notorious *cheat* and *impostor*, was really the *Son of God*, and their long expected *Messias*; was an undertaking so hazardous in itself, and unlikely to succeed, that they stood in need of the most astonishing and evident Miracles, to gain credit to their asseverations; and to be able to overcome that peoples inflexible prejudices, which had withstood the repeated declarations and proofs thereof, given them, before, by CHRIST himself.

AGAIN, in order to convince the Gentiles of the truth, reasonableness, and merits of the Christian Religion, and to bring them over from a state of licentiousness, (allowed by the principles of Gentility) to the practice of the severe morality of the Gospel; the Apostles had occasion, no doubt, for a virtue, power, and efficacy divine, to accompany their exhortations. Therefore St. PAUL says, that the Gift of Tongues, which was one of their miraculous qualifications, was bestowed on them for the sake of the incredulous, and not for believers. And St. GREGORY, alluding to this of the Apostle,

Apostle, observes, that the seed of Faith took root, and the Church of CHRIST derived its establishment from signs and miracles. Not that he was of the opinion of our modern Reformers, that Miracles had either wholly ceased then, or should at any time after, while the Church should have a being. (For, in an Epistle to St. AUSTIN the Apostle of England, he cautions him against motions of vanity, which might possibly arise from his being gifted with this supernatural endowment *)—But he only insinuates, that in the beginning of the Church, they were more necessary, for the planting and nourishment of Faith, than they were afterwards †.

OUR blessed Saviour himself enumerates to his Disciples the many Signs and Miracles, which were to accompany the future propagation of his Gospel, *The Signs ensuing those that shall believe, says he, are these following, &c. ‡.* And tho' this Prediction was immediately verified, in the persons of the Apostles, on their setting out upon the exercise of their Ministry; yet we are also positive, from uncontested proofs, that it was not limited to them alone, but extended, as we shall see presently, to future times; according to the occurrence of similar exigences of circumstances.

IN the mean while, to my present purpose, I beg leave to observe, That the Miraculous

* Vid. ven. BEDE Eccles. Hist. L. 1. ch. 31. † St.

GREG. Hom. 29. in Evang. secund. MAR. ch. 16.

‡ MAR. ch. 16. v. 17.

Powers the Apostles were endowed with had a double effect and advantage—first, with regard to themselves—and, secondly, to those they had to deal with; *to wit*, to be first, an assured proof of their own personal *Merits* and *Holiness*; and, secondly, a confirmation of the *truth* of the *Doctrine* they preached. Their Miracles effectually operated this double conviction on the minds of their Audience, as we gather from the *Acts of the Apostles*; and therefore the like Powers, wherever they are met with, must be productive of the same evidence; and those who acquiesce in them must be judged to act rationally and prudentially: the reason of this is, because Miracles are, as it were, the hand-writing of God himself, or his Divine Seal; and the persons he makes use of to operate them, his mediate Instruments. But, it is certain, Almighty God cannot set his hand to falsehood and unholiness; and it is equally unworthy of his infinite Wisdom, and contray to the ordinary methods of his Divine Providence, to make use of wicked Instruments, for the execution of *operations, supernatural*, and properly his own: and, in short, it is evident, from every part of the Inspired History, that the *Power of Miracles* has ever been instanced as an undoubted testimony to sanctity and truth.

Thus, without going any further for a proof, than the Gospels, we find, that it was the evidence of CHRIST'S Miracles, which extorted from NICODEMUS a confession of his divine Mission—*Rabbi*, said he to him, *we know*

know that you come as a teacher to us from God, for no one can do the Signs you have done, unless God be with him *. We find also, that the blind man, mentioned in St. JOHN, chapter the ninth, to be miraculously restored by our blessed Saviour to his sight; when invidiously questioned by the Pharisees about his cure, and solicited by them to blaspheme his Divine Physician and Benefactor; he generously disdained their suggestions; grounding his opinion of our blessed Saviour's undoubted merits, upon his marvelous actions. *It was never known,* says he, *from the beginning of the world, that God heard sinners—If this man was not from God, he could not have operated what he has †.* And, even our blessed Saviour himself instanced the Miracles he had wrought, as an irrefragable testimony to his Divinity, and to the truth and holiness of his Doctrine; and moreover enforced them as an unpardonable aggravation of the guilt of that perverse, obstinate, disbelieving People—*If I had not,* says he, *done the works which no man ever did, you would have no sin in you ‡.* And lastly, to St. JOHN BAPTIST, sending to him to know whether he was the Messias—*Are you he that is to come, or are we to expect another ||—*Our blessed Lord returned no other answer than the testimony of the wonderful works he wrought—*Tell JOHN,*

* JOHN ch. 3. † ibid ch. 9. ‡ ibid. ch. 15.

v. 24. || MATT. ch. 11, v. 3.

said he to the Messengers, *that the blind are made to see, the lame to walk* *——What therefore the Miraculous Powers were to CHRIST, to wit, a Testimony of his Divinity——what they were to the Apostles, viz. Credentials to their Ministry; that they must, in a respective capacity, be reputed to be to that Church, in which they are at any time found to be lodged, viz. A certain token of the Integrity of her Faith and Doctrine, and of the purity of her Morals. And our blessed Saviour himself does not obscurely insinuate this, in many parts of the Gospels; viz. that the true believers in him, that is, his Church, should be distinguished and known by these *characteristics*.

IN one place he tells us, that they should be vested with the power of working Miracles as great, and greater, than what he himself had wrought——*These things shall they do, and greater than these* †.

IN another place he assures us, that with a sufficient stock of Faith, we should be able to move Mountains (according to the occasional exigency of circumstances) and do other Signs equally surprising and wonderful ‡. And, in fine, in the sixteenth Chapter of St. MARK, as we have seen above, the Miracles he there foretells should be wrought in future times, he assigns as a token and reward of a perfect Faith.

* MATT. ch. II. v. 4, 5. † JOHN ch. 14. v. 12.

‡ MARK ch. 11.

*The signs, says he, that will ensue to those that believe, (not to the unbelievers) are these following, &c.**

BUT now, that the Reformed Churches are wholly destitute of these assured testimonies to the Truth and Holiness of their Belief, does not want any proof from us; because they themselves give up, and utterly disclaim all pretensions to them: and therefore, they would fain persuade the World, that there has been an absolute cessation of Miracles in the Church for a long time before the Reformation, in order to put a better face on their total want of them.

THIS was the language no less of the first Authors of the pretended Reformation, than it has been of the Abettors of it ever since; tho', certainly, if ever there was an exigency of this supernatural Gift at the Divine Hands, (the Miraculous Powers) it was particularly wanting to those pretended Apostles, in order to gain credit to their enterprise, as *important* in its own nature, as it was *daring* and *arduous*—an *important* undertaking, I say, because the pretended drift of it was nothing less than to bring the Church back to its primitive purity, after above eight hundred Years supposed apostacy; when the whole world, during that length of time, was, by their account, plunged into the gulph of abominable errors, supersti-

* MARK ch. 16.

tion, and idolatry; *all* running down with the stream, till LUTHER (magnanimous man) dared oppose himself alone to stem the torrent.

THE undertaking was bold and hazardous, because he entered upon it without any *ordinary Commission*, flying in the face of his lawful Superiors, and impugning his Mother Church, from whom an *ordinary Commission* could only be derived. An *extraordinary Commission* was therefore evidently wanting under such extraordinary circumstances, and nothing less than the Miraculous Powers could be sufficient to procure it the credit of this supernatural Sanction. For, certainly, to reform a Church, supposed to be wholly corrupted, was an attempt no less arduous than its first establishment; and standing in need of similar helps, and the same Credentials; that is, the Seal of Heaven to be plainly stamp'd upon it: and, therefore, if, on this exigent emergency, the Reformers themselves durst lay no pretensions to the Miraculous Powers, 'tis no wonder their followers have disclaimed them ever since. And, as to their allegation, that Miracles have now ceased, it is like the fable of the Fox crying the Grapes were sour, because he could not get at them. In a word, the Reformers would impose their work upon us as Godly and Evangelical—they would have us believe it to have been begun and conducted by Divine Inspiration, but want their proper Credentials to prove

prove their Mission, and to warrant their pretensions.

BUT, while they are thus utterly destitute of these assured tokens, assigned by CHRIST himself, of being the true believers, we flatter ourselves, if authentic Records and the testimonies of the Primitive Fathers merit any credit, that we can make good the Catholic Church's undoubted claim to them.

AMONGST the rest of our proofs, I reckon the Miracles (transmitted to us from the unquestionable authorities of cotemporary Fathers) wrought by St. GREGORY, Bishop of Cæsarea, who lived about the third Century ; and, for the number, variety and stupendousness of the Prodigies it pleased Almighty God to operate through his means, was called *Thaumaturgus*, or, the *Worker of Miracles* ; and was compared in this respect to MOSES.

ST. BASIL gives this abstracted account of them, *viz*, *That he made the Devils tremble—Rivers to change their course ; and, by his prayers, dried up a Pool, which was the occasion of dissention between two avaricious brothers. He also removed a Mountain, to make room for the situation of a Church, &c. **

BESIDES this early testimony of the Miraculous Powers, which some may therefore not have so much difficulty of subscribing to, I refer the

* St. BAS. lib. de Sp. Sto. ch. 29.

reader to those from THEODORET, and others of a later date, quoted heretofore. *Ven. of Rel. Sect. 1.*

I SHALL, presently, add some, that may be also reputed modern—The Evidences of St. AMBROSE, and St. AUSTIN, to Miracles, which they were eye-witnesses of themselves, you have had before, *Sect. 2. Ven. of Relicks*, and therefore need not be repeated.

Now, from these venerable testimonies, and others, which, for brevity's sake, I omit, I draw the following inferences—First, that these holy Fathers were evidently in the opposite opinion to our modern Reformers, of there being a cessation of the Miraculous Powers—Secondly, that whereas, in the foregoing Controversies, we have produced these Primitive Fathers as evidences to the Catholic Doctrine, the Miracles here recited, and avowed by them, must be reputed as so many testimonies to the faith they professed; that is, to the faith the Catholic Church, then, and now, and always, professed—Thirdly, that whereas these, and the other Fathers, whom we have omitted, were men of undoubted credit and veracity, whose authority is admitted in other matters, both dogmatical and historical; there can be no reason shewn why they should not be equally believed in the present relations of the existence of the Miraculous Powers in the Church, and of their being, on occasions, actually exerted; to some whereof

whereof they declare themselves to have been ocular witnesses—I say, there can be no reason why they should not deserve, in this point, the credit of an Historical Faith.

BUT then, this being granted them, the immediate and necessary consequence flowing from this just concession, is, that they must be believed, asserting the existence of the Miraculous Powers in the Church, preferably to a few modern Sectaries, whose manifest interest it is to discredit and deny them, because they themselves can put in no pretensions to them. They must also be believed, as I shall shew in the next Section, preferably to a few sceptical Critics, whose refinements in religious matters, have too plain and direct a tendency to the sapping of the foundation of Religion itself, to carry any weight.

WHAT ST. GREGORY the great's opinion was of the Miraculous Powers, we have seen above, in his letter to St. AUSTIN, the Apostle of *England*. The said St. AUSTIN's gift of Miracles is even allowed by Mr. COLLIER, and other Protestant Authors. *COL. Hist. Eccl.* 1. 2. p. 78. And, indeed, the single memorable instance of his putting the issue of the controversy between himself and the British Bishops, which he wrought on the spot, in the presence of all of them, (as is related at length by venerable BEDE) by restoring sight to a blind man—this one instance, I say, puts the reality of his miraculous Powers past all doubt.

BUT,

BUT, in short, to come nearer home, and to our own times, and, as it were, within our own doors and knowledge, for a proof of the Miraculous Powers still subsisting, and that within the pales of the Roman Catholic Church, I appeal to the many various and stupendous Miracles wrought by the *Thaumaturgus* of the sixteenth Century, St. FRANCIS XAVIER, late Apostle of the Indies ; which are to be read in his life, englished by Mr. DRYDEN ; and so well attested, that the man who is sceptic enough to doubt of the truth of them, may, with as good a front, and equal reason and justice, controvert the being of such a man and woman as HARRY VIII and Queen ELISABETH ; and call in question the most remarkable historical occurrences of those memorable reigns.

AND now, if our adversaries, for their last shift, pretend to oppose to these testimonies of certain and undeniable Miracles, a few that may be doubtful, supposititious, or even counterfeit ; I beg leave to say, that this plea is entirely evasive and sophistical. For—First, the integrity of Faith, and the credit of the Church, is no way concerned in, or affected by a mistaken Miracle ; tho', for reasons before alledged, *viz*, Miracles being the seal or hand-writing of God himself, it is certainly confirmed by a true one. Therefore—Secondly, a false Miracle cannot invalidate the merits and consequences of a true Miracle, known to be such. And such, I flatter myself, I have proved those to be,

be, for which I have brought unquestionable authorities in the foregoing premises—such are these which the Church, after the most rigorous examination, and the most unquestionable attestations to the truth of them, authentically espouses; and the consequences, equally certain, flowing from them, are what I undertook to make good in the beginning of this Section, viz,

FIRST, That the Miraculous Powers have not ceased in the Church; but that she has, from time to time, been vested with them.

SECONDLY, that they are an assured token of the integrity of her Faith, and purity of her Morals; that is, of being the *true, orthodox and holy* Church of CHRIST; and that the Reformed Churches, by not daring to put in any pretensions to the Miraculous Powers, have this negative, but strong proof, standing in full force against them, of being neither *Orthodox* nor *Holy*.

SECTION

SECTION III.

A further Defence of the Church's claim to the Miraculous Powers, since the Apostolic Age; against the particular opposition of Doctor CONYERS MIDDLETON, in his late Scepticism, entitled, a Free Enquiry, &c.

OUR late pretended Reformers, being wholly destitute of the *Miraculous Powers*, to give credit, as a token of an *extraordinary Mission*, to their temerarious enterprise; were necessitated, as we have seen in the last Section, to plead a total cessation of these supernatural Virtues in the Church of God, in order to give a better grace to their want of them. But at what Epoch of time to assign the period of the manifestation of these Powers, was the difficult point, in which they never yet could unanimously agree. Some limited them to the beginning of the fourth Century, when, persecution being at an end, the Gospel at liberty, and the propagation of it authorised by law, they imagined the occasion for this extraordinary aid from Heaven to have subsided. Others, unable to withstand the Testimony of irrefragable Vouchers, to their subsisting in after times, have brought them down to the fifth and sixth Centuries; and some, as Doctor MIDDLETON acknowledges, in his *Free Enquiry*, to the seventh Century, or even lower. Of this number is JEREMY COLLIER, and

and other candid Protestants, admitting St. AUSTIN, the Apostle of England, to have been blessed with the Powers—Thus varying among themselves as much about these supernatural evidences to the true Faith, as about its Tenets and Principles.

BUT our modern Enemy to the Miraculous Powers, the Doctor, with whom we are now engaged, striking at root and branch with one blow, has abridged the difficulty, by contesting All Miracles, but what have the sanction of Scripture for them. And tho', by this bold push, the Doctor has dealt with us more unmercifully than his Brethren, yet it must be owned that he has acted more in character, and more consequent to Reforming principles: because, as he justly observes, p. 96 of his *introduction*—admitting the Miraculous Powers to have subsisted in the Church in any one Age after the Apostles, there can no tolerable reason be assigned for disallowing her claim in any succeeding Age. And whereas, as he had observed, just before, p. 76 of his *introduction*, the Miracles attested by the Fathers of the fourth and fifth Centuries became a confirmation of Doctrines and Institutions, entirely *popish*, and rejected at this time of day by himself and all true Protestants, as superstitious; the belief of one must, of consequence, infer the belief of the others. Therefore the Doctor, in this desperate case, thinking himself under a necessity of rejecting *both* or
none,

none, has embraced the first extream, chusing rather to appear an Infidel in belief, than to be a half-pace Reformer. But a *desperate* conduct, in support of a *desperate* cause, is no proof of the *reasonableness* of it; and that the Doctor's proceeding, in this point, is wholly destitute of reason, (as he is now become our antagonist in this debate) is incumbent on me to shew.

To follow the Doctor, step by step, through his whole extraordinary *scepticism*, would carry me beyond the narrow bounds of a single Section. I have occasionally touched upon, and obviated his principal argument, as it fell in pertinently to the subject in hand, in another place *.

I WILL endeavour to dispatch his remaining exceptions with only a few remarks, such as are obvious, and cannot be dispensed with, since I apprehend a naked view of his arguments, in themselves, to be sufficient to discover their weakness; they being, I beg leave to say, either foreign to the purpose, or what make as much against scriptural Miracles, even those of CHRIST and his Apostles, as against the Miraculous Powers of the Church; and therefore by proving too much, prove nothing at all.

IN his Preface, p. 9. the Doctor lays down the following rule for the basis of his *Enquiry*, and of his own judgment resulting from

* Ven. of Relicks. Sect 2.

it—He says, that the *Reality of a Fact depends on the joint credibility of the Fact itself, and of the Witnesses who attest it.* But the first part of this Rule, I apprehend to want an explanation, or not to be true, but under certain restrictions.

If, by *credibility*, he means the *probability* of a Fact, his Rule is true, with respect to *human actions*; because, what is *humanly improbable*, no doubt, becomes *humanly incredible*: But with respect to *supernatural Acts*, I beg leave to demur to the Rule, and even to reject it entirely.

For instance, *raising the Dead to Life*, carries no appearance of *human probability*, and is only *Miraculous* because it is above what is *human*: therefore its credibility must rest on some other foundation. This, to us that have a fact by rehearsal, or from other hands, the Doctor thinks to be the credit of their vouchers—which is the second member of his rule.

Now the vouchers to the *primitive Miracles* were the *primitive Fathers*, whom the Doctor, therefore, has industriously endeavoured to discredit to all intents and purposes, and I have already, occasionally, attempted to justify *—what I said then, I therefore need not repeat. In sum, the merit of their evidence depends on the resolution of one plain and obvious enquiry, *viz, Whether they are to be deemed*

* Ven. of Relicks. Sect. 2.

Men of common sense, and of an honest heart?
For, with regard to Miracles, which are matters of fact, I cannot apprehend any other qualifications to be requisite.

AND now, to dispute them either of these qualities, upon the Doctor's single and singular judgment, or groundless prejudices, in contradiction to the universal repute, they had ever possessed in the World, seems, as I observed once before, quite unreasonable: but yet, even the nature and validity of their evidence, as far as it is by us admitted, seems to be what the Doctor has also widely mistaken.

For, first, the credit we give them, (as meer relators of facts, and abstracting from Church authority) is no more than an historical credit, such as is due (in proportion to the degree of credit they may deserve) to every Author of historical records. But our belief of the Miraculous Powers, subsisting from time to time in the Church, as an Article of our Faith, rests on the authority of the Church, under the direction and influence of the HOLY GHOST, which understands the predictions or promises of our blessed Lord, cited in the last section*, to appertain, indefinitely, to all times of the Church's being. And therefore where the Doctor, page 112 of his *introduction*, allows the Testimony of the Fathers to be of use in

* JOHN ch. 14. v. 12. MARK ch. 11. ch. 16.

transmitting to us the genuine books of the Scriptures, &c. &c.—If he means that he receives them upon their bare testimony, he, in this, pays them a deference, which we ourselves do not; for we follow St. AUSTIN'S Rule, who affirms that he would not believe (even) the Gospel, unless he was induced thereto by the Authority of the Church *. Therefore it is the authority of the Church, in all these matters, in which she espouses the evidence of the Fathers, which renders it of any kind of weight with us in point of Faith.

SECONDLY, taking the Fathers, in this point, as barely historical Evidences, we are not tied down to the belief of every individual fact they may have delivered; but, considering their complex Relations in a body, we look upon it a thing incredible, that they should, one and all of them, conspire in a formed design of imposing upon the whole world in their own time, and ever since, an incomprehensible belief of the *Miraculous Powers* subsisting in the Church, if it had not been founded on truth; and still more surprising, if they had thus imposed on Mankind their own inventions, that they should have obtained that current success for so many Centuries, never to be detected, 'till Dr. MIDDLETON, fourteen, fifteen, or sixteen hundred and more, years

* Ep. Fundam. ch. 4, 5.

after, by some unknown lights, discovered all their Cheats and Impositions.

THEREFORE, when the Doctor advances, afterwards, in his *postscript*, page 216, 217, that the history of Miracles is widely different from that of common events, *the one always to be suspected of course, without the strongest evidence for it; the other to be admitted of course, without the strongest reason to suspect it*—in answer to this, it will be reasonable to ask, why the universal opinion of the existence of the Miraculous Powers, prevailing for so many ages, and resting on the Testimony of vouchers of established repute, *the primitive Fathers*, (being opposed to his scepticism and singular judgment, coming so late) is not to be reputed this *strong evidence*, and the *strongest* historical Evidence that can be required?

BUT thirdly, allowing some of their relations may have been mistakes, 'tis morally impossible they could all be so; and then, supposing any one to be true, since the apostolic age, (and I think those I have cited more than once from St. AMBROSE and St. AUSTIN, as ocular witnesses, deserves this irrefragable credit) then these two Evidences evince the Miraculous Powers to have subsisted after the Apostles time, and consequently destroy the whole system of the Doctor's opposition against them.

THUS much I thought proper to add to our prior defence of the Fathers, and for an illustration

illustration of the nature of their evidences, and of the credit we allow them, as historical witnesses of facts.

BUT, before I proceed to canvass his other exceptions to the Miraculous Powers, I beg leave to make a transient digression to another point, which still has a connection with the point in debate.

HE often, in the course of his Criticism, makes an avowed Confession, particularly in his *Introduction*, page 65, that the state of retirement (by him contemptuously called *Monkery*) and all the pretended present corruptions of Rome, were taught and defended by the Fathers of those respective ages, and even Miracles alledged in their favour; and, as in this confession he is more ingenuous than his Brethren, who endeavour to stifle or disguise the Sentiments of these great Men, we are so far obliged to him.

BUT now, from this frank concession, there occur two obvious questions to be asked—First, Why the Evidence of the Fathers, to such Doctrines and Rites, should be admitted, as a proof that these respective Doctrines were then professed? And why their witnessing such and such Miracles, should not equally conclude the existence of those powers; or be sufficient to evince such Miracles to have been then actually wrought? For, had they prevaricated in either of these relations, they being respectively to a matter of fact, *to wit*, whether it was so, or was

not so, it had been an easy task to have convicted them of falshood.

SECONDLY, It may be asked, Why the Fathers attestation to the Doctrines of the Church, in their times, being admitted, is not to be reputed a proof of it's being the Doctrine derived from the Apostles?

To the first, as he frankly acknowledges the different evidences, viz, to the *Doctrines* and *Miracles*, and has assigned no other disparity between one and the other, than what we have just refuted; I take it for granted, that he could not, and I apprehend none can be given.

To the second, he says, in the body of his enquiry, that no advantage can accrue to us from his said concession, because he admits the Fathers *barely as witnesses, not as guides*; declaring to us what was then believed, not what was true——what was practiced, not what ought to be practiced *——Very good; and thank God we have an infallible guide, which he has not; the Church, guided by the HOLY GHOST into all truth, and guiding Us into all truth.

BUT still, to argue *ad hominem*, the Fathers, as witnesses, are yet in this sense guides (and so confessed by him) to point out, or to shew us the road of the Church in their time; that

* Enquiry page 112.

is, to tell us the Doctrines and Rites which were then professed, which we find to be the same as the Catholic Church professes now.

BUT, what then, says he, *the dispute between us is not, how ancient the Catholic Doctrines and Practices are, but how true?*—Granted; but (abstracting from the assured Rule of the truth of the Church's Doctrine, her *Infallibility* as a Guide) we apprehend, the *antiquity* of a Doctrine or Practice, to be the strongest presumption, and the best human proof for its being genuine and true, that can be desired. No, says the Doctor, for this plea, *Antiquity* and *Authority* was the Plea of the Heathens themselves for their superstitious Rites.

BUT, surely, as fond as he every where shews himself to be, of putting us upon a level with these enemies of Christianity, and of a Revealed Religion, he cannot be so blinded with passion and prejudice, as not to see a wide difference between our, and their respective pleas, on the assigned foundation of *antiquity*—For the *Heathenish Rites* being originally and fundamentally bad, no length of time could give a sanction to them; but, like a corrupted Spring, the nearer you approach to it, the more infected its waters are.

BUT the origin of Christianity being indisputably good, the nearer it draws to its source (humanly speaking) the purer it must be—I said humanly speaking, because, as the Doctrine of the Church is conveyed through the

channels of truth itself, viz, the Church under the influence of the HOLY GHOST, there can be no danger of its receiving any infection by its removal or distance from the source ; but will be always pure and untainted in all ages.

AND now, to come to a close of this digression, and to sum up the whole strength of the precedent argument ; the Doctor's owning the Fathers to be abettors of the Catholic Doctrine and Practices, is, as I observed in the beginning, an act of ingenuity we thank him for ; because, tho' this confession is no more than what the force of truth has extorted from him, yet it is what his friends have not been so candid to make before.

BUT, then, his thinking this concession can give no weight to the Catholic cause, we apprehend to be a mistake, and flatter ourselves, from what we have just offered, will be judged so by the impartial Reader : for, certainly, from the nature of the thing, long *prescription*, and *Antiquity*, strengthens the right of every *Tenure*. But still, the stress we lay on this, or the merit we allow to primitive Authority, is what the Doctor has again widely mistaken. We profess a profound respect for antiquity— we pay a deference to its brightest ornaments, and greatest supports, the primitive Fathers ; yet only as creditable witnesses ; for it is the authority of the Church, and the Traditions, which she has espoused, on which our Faith ultimately rests ; whose credit being unshaken,
(and

(and CHRIST has promised that Hell itself should not effect it) all attacks upon us, any other way, are vain and idle.

I now return from this digression, to the direct subject of this section, which was to canvass the Doctor's exceptions to the Miraculous Powers. His remaining exceptions, I hope to make appear to be as weak and groundless, as any of the rest we have already produced.

He ushers these in with a *postulatum*, which won't be granted, and, tho' it should, makes nothing to his purpose—which is this. He says, there is no clear account of the successors to the Apostles, for the forty years immediately following, having inherited their Miraculous Powers; from whence he concludes a cessation of them ever since. But I apprehend his assertion to go a begging, and therefore, his inference from it unconclusive.

For—first, his argument is at best but a negative one; and, as there is no positive proof of the Powers having failed within that intermediate space, nothing decisive can be drawn from it.

SECONDLY, If it was so, that there was no explicit account of miracles within that time, might not this have happened, because Christianity being then in its infancy, and its several concerns not yet ripe enough for to afford subject for regular records or memoirs; when there was nothing else then appeared

but meer dogmatical Epistles and Instructions to the faithful, to confirm them in the faith, they had just received from the Apostles——and that the Pastors found work enough on their hands to arm their Flocks against an inundation of evils daily flowing upon them, from outward persecutions of Infidels, and intestine divisions, and delusions of false Brethren?

THIRDLY, Is not St. IGNATIUS the Martyr's prayer, when condemned to be devoured by wild beasts, that he might not be spared, as other Confessors had been, (all which is gathered from his own Epistles) a plain insinuation that these Prodigies had happened before? And, surely, these deliveries must have been reputed as miraculous as DANIEL's delivery in the lions den, which is mentioned in Holy Writ as a miraculous manifestation of the Divine Power.

FOURTHLY, the immediate successors to these great Champions of the Christian Faith, who were personally acquainted with them, JUSTIN and IRENAEUS, speaking of the Miracles that were wrought within their knowledge and memory, tho' they did not reduce their relations into the regularity of *Annals* or *Records*, may they not be supposed to allude to the Miracles of their younger, as well as of their later days? Therefore, as I just said, there is only a bare negative against the existence of the Miraculous Powers, in that small interval of time; whereas there are plain insinuations,
and

and the strongest presumptions, in their favour.

BUT tho' the whole argument should be admitted, viz, that there was, in that space of time, a suspension of the Miraculous Powers; it makes nothing against the Catholic claim; and therefore is nothing to the Doctor's purpose: because the Church does not, by this claim, pretend to any inherent virtue, or to a periodical succession of the Powers, but that Almighty God has, frequently, since the Apostolic age, bestowed them upon her; and, by CHRIST's promise, MARK II. and elsewhere, may, and does, from time to time, when it seems meet to his unsearchable wisdom, bless her with them; which the Reformed Churches never had, nor ever pretended to.

THE Doctor is next obliged, (Intro. p. 85.) to take up with the arguments which his friends make use of for the cessation of Miracles in these later times, viz, that after the propagation of the Gospel had gained ground, and especially after it was supported by the sanction and encouragement of public authority, that the want of the aid of Miraculous Powers subsided.

BUT, first, If these Powers flourished before this happy Epoch of the establishment of Religion by law, and during the time the Church was under persecution, it, at least, overturns the Doctor's system of their having failed immediately

mediately from the Apostolic Age. And, as by his avowed concession *, allowing the Miraculous Powers to subsist at any time after the Apostles, gives a just claim to them in every succeeding age ; this pretended plea of the occasion for them subsiding, can no ways avail his purpose.

BUT, again, by what inspiration or authority does he or his friends limit the manifestation of the Divine Powers ? *The spirit*, as has been said, *breathes where and when it lists*. In the Jewish Church the gift of Prophecy and Miracles flourished and subsided in different Eras, which we cannot presume to account for. Our blessed Lord's prediction or promise of Miracles to his Church, ST. MARK, C. II. and elsewhere, is not limited to any time ; and therefore it does not become any one else to set bounds to them, which he has not.

WITHIN the body of the Enquiry he excepts against the Miraculous Powers, from the characters of the persons vested with them, whom he supposes to be the Laity, the very scum of the people ; or a set of obscure Monks and Recluses, against the last of whom he conceives an inveterate spleen and prejudice. But this objection seems, first, to be wholly arbitrary ; for, the Fathers saying, as he relates it, *that Miracles were wrought among them*, does

* Introd. p. 96.

not exclude the Clergy from a share in the gift of these Powers——Secondly, Supposing it to be, as he says; Almighty God, when he took DAVID from having the care of his father's flock to sway the scepter of Israel, he told SAMUEL that he did not regard the meen or condition of the person, but the heart——CHRIST, in composing his College of Apostles, chose a set of ignorant fishermen; and St. PAUL tells us, that *he makes use of the foolish of the world to confound the wise, and of the weak to defeat the strong*: And, therefore, Almighty God, in his infinite wisdom, might have pursued the same conduct, in selecting, for the instruments of his Miraculous operations, an ignorant but virtuous Clown, or an humble Recluse, preferably to an irreligious Statesman, or a proud Churchman——Oh! surely the Doctor must be conscious to himself of a bad cause, and a dearth of arguments, to be necessitated to lay hold of such feeble supports for its defence.

ANOTHER exception to the Miracles of the primitive times, as weak and defenceless as the last, is the pretended ostentatious manner, with which he alledges them to have been operated, when they challenged the Infidels to assist at them, and to become ocular witnesses of the supernatural events.

BUT, be it so, what does this charge evince, but that those primitive Miracles were done in the face of the whole World, and were so frequent

frequent, notorious and evident, that they could not be concealed, and what the Christians had no need to be ashamed of. Tricks and Juggles are the works of darkness, and usually practiced in a corner; and if the primitive Miracles had been such, they must have been mad, as well as insolent, to have provoked their enemies to discover their cheats and impostures.

'Tis true, the supernatural preservation of the Martyrs from fire, wild beasts, and other variety of torments they laboured under, tho' made never so manifest, were what the Infidel Tyrants, and their executioners, imputed to magic Art; as the Miracles of our blessed Lord were by the Jews ascribed to Beelzebub before. But I am sorry the Doctor has no better precedents to copy after, for the support of his injurious surmise.

HOWEVER, to speak directly to the trivial and indecent objection——What is there in the pompousness and solemnity of the primitive Miracles, which an Infidel or Deist might not object to many scriptural Miracles, even those of our blessed Saviour himself?

IN the third Book of Kings, we are told that ELIAS gave a public challenge to all the false Prophets of Israel, to display the Powers of their Heathen Deities, by drawing fire from Heaven upon a Holocaust; whilst he, on his side, should be engaged to invoke the like manifestation of the Divine Power, for a proof of the

the God of Israel being the true God. Accordingly all the People of Israel were summoned to come and be witnesses of the strife; the holy Prophet laughed and sneered at the false Prophets miscarriage; and lastly, when, to their utter confusion, it came to his turn to exert the Miraculous Power, he was indued with, he did it in the most pompous, solemn and confident manner; and upon the Issue of the event, flushed as it were with success, he ordered all the false Prophets to be killed on the spot, as a trophy of his victory. Now had an operation of this pompous nature been related of St. SIMEON STYLITES, St. HILARION, or of any other professor of *Monkery*, as the Doctor contemptuously calls these primitive Recluses, what a fine subject of raillery would it not have afforded him?

AGAIN, we read in the book of Exodus, that MOSES had a frequent strife of power with the Magicians of Ægypt; and, to omit numerous other Scriptural proofs to the same effect, our blessed Lord himself was continually repeating, and making a merit to the Jews, of the many signs and wonders he wrought among them. Therefore, as a direct answer to this trivial objection—from all these Scriptural instances, which seem to discover an air of ostentation, we are to gather the following important instruction—that actions are not to be weighed nor judged by their outward appearances,

pearances, but from the inward Spirit that influences and directs them.

THERE may be in actions, in themselves, truly commendable, an ostentation of self virtue, which is the height of Luciferian pride; and there may be an ostentation of the Divine Power, which is compatible with the profoundest humility. Such was the Spirit that actuated the operations of those great Servants of God, the instruments of his divine honour, which we just recited from the Inspired Writings—such was the act of the Blessed Virgin, as I mentioned in another place, the greatest and humblest of all Creatures, when *she magnified the Lord for the mighty things he had done to her*. And such, infine, was the Spirit of the primitive Christians, when they gloried in the Virtues and Powers, Almighty God had indued them with; not out of a vain ostentation of their own merit, but for a manifestation of the Divine omnipotency; out of a zeal for his honour and glory, and for the advancement of the cause of his Church, and propagation of his Law: and thro' an inward instigation of the same Divine Spirit, which had bestowed upon them those Virtues, whose ways are unsearchable and above human understanding.

THE exception to the primitive Miracles, which occurs next to be animadverted upon, is with respect to the Miracles themselves, considered in their own nature.

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 UNDER this head comes his objection, which were wrought in confirmation of, or even by the means of the Catholic Rites, which the Doctor looks upon to be Superstitious; and therefore he not being resigned to allow them, is necessitated to reject their evidences. But this argument manifestly goes a begging; and, as it has been over-ruled in another place, where, speaking of Miracles wrought by the Relicks of Saints *, I occasionally touched upon it, I refer my Reader to that reply.

HIS further objections on this head rolls upon two points—first, that among the Miraculous Powers we lay claim to, there is a deficiency of some, which seem to be most requisite, and were likely to be most serviceable—and, secondly, that there was an ostentation of others, which were, in their own nature liable to the suspicion of cheat and imposture.

THE Powers of the first sort, that he thinks to have been wanting, were the *Gift of Tongues*, which he roundly affirms never to have existed since the Apostolic Age. But, as we have only his bare word for it, we are at liberty to believe him or no, as we please. He, indeed, has the assurance, in contradiction to attested facts, to instance the truth of this assertion, against the Apostle of the Indies, St. FRANCIS XAVIER, to whom the Miracles of every other kind being allotted, this, he says, was never included †.

* Ven. of Rel. Sect. 2. † Pref. Page 20.

BUT, if we believe the History of this Saint's life, translated by Mr. DRYDEN, he not only possessed this gift in an eminent Degree, so as to speak the several Languages of those countries most perfectly and elegantly, tho' they were above an hundred in number, and thirty of them entirely different; and to understand, reciprocally, the Natives of those various and extensive Climates; but, moreover, with two additional Privileges, *to wit*, of being understood when preaching to an Auditory composed of different Nations and Dialects, as tho' he had been haranguing each in their Mother Tongue—Secondly of satisfying, by a single Answer, several questions proposed to him, at the same time, relating to disparate subjects.

BUT, supposing that this gift had not been known to have existed, since the Apostolic age; GOD is Master of his own Gifts, and best knows the proper times and seasons to dispose of them.

AMONG the Miraculous Powers, which the Evangelist gives us an Account of, exerted by our Blessed Saviour, the Gift of Tongues is not once mentioned, unless the three Hebrew Words he uttered on the Cross, *Eloi, Eloi, &c.* is to be reckoned an instance of it; tho', for ought we know he might as well have had Persons of different Tongues to deal with, as the Apostles after the Descent of the HOLY GHOST upon them, then residing in Judæa—And when St. JOHN BAPTIST sent to be informed whether

whether he was the Messias, he returned a distinct Account of his Miraculous Powers as the token of his Divine Mission; but the Gift of Tongues was not included in the List.

EVEN the Apostles themselves, and the Disciples, who felt that astonishing and immediate influence, by the visible descent of the HOLY GHOST upon them, were not all gifted alike. For, as St. PAUL says, 1 Cor. ch. 12. v. 28, God, for the exaltation of his Church, in its Infancy, when it stood most in need of the manifestation of his Miraculous Powers, made some Apostles, others Prophets—others he endued with the Power of Miracles—gave the virtue of healing to others; and, infine, blessed some (and a few) with the Gift of Tongues. And, therefore, if, in the future times of his Church, he did not bestow this last Gift, where it was not wanted, what can be inferred from it, but that his All-wise Providence does not distribute his Blessings in vain. Respectively to the Gift of Tongues, thus was those Countries circumstanced, where the primitive Fathers lived, who leave us an account mostly of those Miracles which were operated within their own neighbourhood, where Greek and Latin were then the living Languages in use, and where any other would have been as unserviceable, as Syriac in England.

BUT, whether Almighty God did not confer this gift on Missionaries in foreign Parts, is what they have not told us, and therefore is

more than what the Doctor can presume to determine. We have just heard of a late instance, in St. FRANCIS XAVIER, of the Existence of this Gift, and we hope that those authentic attestations of the fact, will be deemed, at least to be a sufficient counterpoise to the Doctor's denial of it.

HE cavils next with the Miraculous Powers, which, by the primitive Relations, did subsist in those times—These were, *Raising the Dead—*
*healing the sick—casting out Devils, &c. &c.**

THE first power of *raising the Dead*, he confidently avers never to have been exerted in the Church, since the Apostles time: and tho' he presently after confesses that St. IRENAEUS, Bishop of Lions in France, in the second Century, asserted the manifestation of this astonishing power in several instances, yet he thinks THEOPHILUS, at the same time Bishop of Antioch in Asia, disclaiming the said Power, to invalidate entirely St. IRENAEUS's testimony: and I apprehend this to be just as conclusive, as to suppose that the Sun *does not shine* at Constantinople, because it may be *overcast* at London. Therefore, in short, THEOPHILUS might have been sensible of their want of this Power at home, yet, at so great a distance as France, have been ignorant of its existing there: and, in the mean while, why he is to be believed disclaiming the Powers in one place, and St.

* *Pollic. page 72, &c.*

IRENÆUS asserting them in another, is not to be believed, I would be glad to know.

AND lastly, THEOPHILUS his seemingly lamenting the negation of this power, insinuates it to have been a subtraction of a Grace they had been favoured with not long before—and then, What becomes of the Doctor's assertion of this Power having failed since the Apostolic Age?

BUT, infine, if the Doctor was only indued with a little candour, and barely an historical Faith, he would own, and allow some credit due to several authentic Relations of the Dead raised to life since St. IRENÆUS's Time, which I have not room to appeal to here.

To go no further than St. FRANCIS XAVIER, just mentioned; twenty-four attested instances of this Miracle of Miracles are attributed to him, which there is as little room to doubt of, as of his having been in the Indies, or that ever such a Man was in being.

Now, as to the other Powers, *viz*, of *healing the Sick, casting out Devils*, and the rest, the Doctor thinks them to lie under the strongest suspicion of Imposture. But first, his bare surmise or imagination, is no proof; and he unfortunately borrows his distrust from his old friends, the Jews, who were ever charging the imputation of imposture, on our Blessed Saviour, relatively to his miraculous cures; and adding, that he chased away Devils in Virtue of Belzebub, or by diabolical combination.

AND now, with respect to the primitive Miracles, just specified, the credit of their venerable vouchers, the ancient Fathers, which we flatter ourselves to have sufficiently established above, may be allowed to overballance his injurious cavils—There is an instance of the Miraculous Powers in another nature, which he has not only unguardedly confessed, to the utter overthrow of his extravagant opposition, but has made use of them to another malignant purpose. This is the Miraculous delivery of the Martyrs, lying under the pressures of their various Tortures; which, as I hinted in another place, he mentions and owns not to their honour, but for to extenuate the merit of their glorious Sacrifice, while he supposes a presumptuous confidence in the like supernatural preservation, to have egged them on, and made them more eager for the combat.

IN the mean while, the fact is by him confessed, and evinces, at least in this respect, a glaring manifestation of the Miraculous Powers.

WE come now to the Doctor's last *corps of reserve*; and it may, therefore, be supposed, what he thought not the least formidable of all his forces, since he reserved it for to bring up the rear, and to make with it his desperate push; tho', indeed, in the course of the Controversy he had every now and then thrown it in to take a share in the combat. In a word, not content, as we have just seen, to
borrow

borrow aid from the Jews to impugn the Miraculous Powers, he now hauls in even the Heathens themselves to his assistance.

HE heretofore shewed himself extreamly fond of drawing a parallel between the Pagan rites and those of the Catholic Church ; and the vanity and malice of his attempt has been exposed, as it deserved, by a better hand.

Now he affects to level the Pagan Miracles, * which were the avowed deeds of Satan, with the Primitive Miracles of Christianity, ascribed to a Divine Power, and done in God's name : he attempts to sink the reputation of one, by opposing to it the mistaken fame of the other ; and, to this intent, allows the recorders of those Works of Darkness equal credit with the Primitive Fathers, who transmitted to us the triumphs of the *power of GOD over that of Satan*—St. CHRYSOSTOM, AMBROSE, AUSTIN, JEROM, and the rest ; the greatest Lights of the Church, celebrated for their Learning and Virtue. And, lastly, he is not ashamed to give weight to the objections which JULIAN the Apostate, CELSUS, and other avowed abettors of Paganism, made, in hatred of Christianity, to the Primitive Miracles heretofore.

Now when a Man's inveterate preventions push him on to take such unguarded and unwarrantable steps—when, under the counter-

* Possic. p. 216, 217.

feint pretence of enquiring into Truth, and becoming an advocate for it, he is obliged to side with its most virulent enemies, he sinks quite beneath our notice. What is there in the odious parallel, which he affects to draw between the Pagan Miracles and the Miraculous Powers asserted by the Church, but what an Atheist might urge to invalidate the proofs of Christianity, and a revealed Religion? The Empire of Satan has been of very ancient standing—alas! we are too sensible of it from Holy Writ itself, without having recourse to the testimony of its Pagan Vouchers. From the first beginning, that he drew mankind from the homage of their Creator, to become a votary to himself, he affected to ape the Divine Worship in every particular—he had his *Altar*, his *Sacrifices*, his *Priests*, his *Oracles*, and his *false Prophets*, to correspond to the Divine *Prophecies*; and, in short, by God's permission, and just judgment on his infatuated Votaries, he also had, for their further delusion, his Ministers, to display his infernal Powers.

THE Magicians of Ægypt, through their hellish art, did surprizing things in opposition to the supernatural Wonders wrought by MOSES—SIMON MAGUS did the like in emulation of the Miracles of the Apostles; and, in time to come, *Antichrist* will do such seeming Wonders, as will go near to deceive even the elect. But, still, these will always be deemed

ed the Works of Darknefs, meer illufions and impoftures ; and the others the handy-work of God himfelf, and a demonftration and proof of the Divine Power. And, as Almighty God's arm is not fhortened, nor his power abridged, what (we are affured by the infpired Penmen) he has done heretofore, he can do again ; and in fpite of Dr. MIDDLETON's shameful recourfe to Paganifm, to the Jews, and to every other odious refuge, to invalidate our proof of the exiftence of the *Miraculous Powers* fince the Apoftlic age, we doubt not but, even from the feeble defence of them we have attempted, it will appear evident, to every unprejudiced judgment, that Almighty God has, from time to time, for the exaltation of his Church, certainly exerted them.

THO' the narrow limits, I am confined to, would not allow me to defcant on the Doctor's extravagant oppofition fo largely as there is room for it, and the fubject might require ; yet I can affure the Reader that I have faithfully fet forth the whole fubftance and marrow of his argumens, and have omitted none that can be reputed of any weight. In giving you now, and before, * this fhort fketeh of his temerarious undertaking, with only fuch obvious remarks as could not be excufed, it has fwelld them into a long Section. Yet I cannot take leave of the Doctor, without trefpaffing further

* Ven. of Relicks. Sect. 2.

on my reader's patience, to acquaint him with the pleasant and extraordinary manner he goes about to justify his own professed disregard for the Primitive Fathers, and how he accounts for the contrary deference paid to them, by the rest of his Reforming Brethren of his own Church.

He sets forth this difference of sentiments, or rather, as he represents the matter, his candour in declaring his own sentiments, and their dissingenuity in concealing theirs, in substance as follows †.

He says, that in the reign of King HENRY the eighth, when matters for a Reformation were not quite ripe, the King, utterly averse to such a Change, and in every Article, but his determined hatred to the Pope, a rank Papist; they were obliged to comply with his humour in the point in question—He might have added, in every other point; and how perfectly the Hero of the Reformation at home, Archbishop CRANMER, played the dissembler and hypocrite in Religion, is well known.

He proceeds to tell us, that in the reign of king EDWARD the sixth, tho' a Reformation being then resolved upon and supported by Law, they were at liberty to rectify the wrong steps they had taken in this point, and were conscious of them, yet that, to avoid the mark of inconsistency, they chose to adhere to them. But,

† Introd. p. 101, &c. &c.

whereas

whereas they made a bold and immediate change in many other points more material, it is a subject of surprise, why they should be so very scrupulous about this particular.

IN the reign of Queen Mary, he continues to tell us, that they were still less at liberty to recede from their first measures. And, no doubt, as they were of such a pliant disposition, to square their principles by the humour of the reigning Power, it will be easily supposed—and therefore it is much less to be wondered at, that, in the succeeding reign, when Queen ELIZABETH, a Princess after their own heart, acceded to the throne; who, tho' she modelled a Church according to the modern Taste, yet being ambitious of its having an antick hue and appearance, and therefore, among other respects, insisting on the Primitive Fathers retaining their ancient credit, that they easily complimented her in a point, which they now began to look upon as a matter of indifference.

AND in this manner the Doctor represents this point to be conducted, the Fathers keeping their ground, till this late period of time, when the Church being fully established by law, he says, a motive of another nature has necessitated her to go on in the wrong track that had been chalked out to them, by their first Reformers, *to wit*, in self-defence against their ~~four~~, grumbling Dissenters; that is, blowing hot and cold; at one time cramming the whole *posse* of the Fathers down their throats,
for

for to silence them: at other times, making no account of these venerable Authorities, when produced as Evidences to Catholic Tenets.

THIS, in brief, is the idea this Gentleman gives of the establishment of his Church at home; for which, I can venture to say, his friends do not thank him; nor will I presume to animadvert upon it. I only beg leave to observe, that it entirely coincides with the relation I have given, through this Essay, of these Religious changes in general, of being a patched business, conducted by temporising motives, and principles of liberty and policy. A strange Idea of a *Godly Reformation!* But, as I have here a Champion of the Reformation for my Voucher, I may be truly allowed to say, *I Judge you from your own Mouth.*

CHAP.



C H A P. X.

A Review of the Premises, addressed to the Christian Reader, and submitted to his impartial judgment, as a direction to him in the choice of his Religion—With a short conclusion, in a word of advice particularly to the Catholic Reader.

WE have now, Christian Reader, gone through the principal points controverted between the Reformed Churches and us, that is, through as many as is necessary to answer the design of this Essay; which was to shew the vanity and unjustifiableness of the pretended Reformation, and that it has entirely fallen short of the merits of that pompous title.

THE inauspicious beginning of that famed Event, the infamous characters of the Authors of it, the springs and motives, which set it on foot, viz, Pride, Lust, Liberty and every human Passion; and the unwarrantable methods, with which it was conducted (all which particulars we have set forth in the Introduction to this Essay) are invincible Prejudices against it, and demonstrative Proofs that the hand of GOD could not be concerned therein, nor the HOLY GHOST any ways influencing or aiding to it.

THEIR

THEIR deserting, in the sequel, the plain and obvious sense of Scripture, by imposing upon it their own arbitrary and strained interpretations; whereas the Catholic Doctrine is quite agreeable to the sacred Text in its most natural meaning (as I *flatter* myself, I have made to appear in the foregoing Controversies) this alone, I say, is enough to bring their Church into discredit, and is a confirmation of ours. And, whereas a religious and godly Reformation ought to have been calculated for the *amendment of manners* and the *restoration of Discipline*, as well as for the *abolishing of errors*: they, by laying aside the *Evangelical Counsels* both in theory and practice, by forfeiting those assured marks of *Holiness*, and the means leading to it (as I have shewn in the last Controversy) they thereby, I say, fail in this second end of a *Church Reformation*.

THESE Truths are what I have attempted to prove in the Course of this Essay, and I *flatter* myself not unsuccessfully; at least, I humbly apprehend that what I have offered on this head, may deserve to carry so much weight with every unprejudiced Reader, as to ground a reasonable distrust of the much-boasted work of the Reformation, and to give room for a just enquiry whether that, or the Church it has pretended to reform, is, on the upshot,

upshot, possessed of the true Faith of CHRIST, and of the assured means to salvation.

IF Religion, indeed, was merely a political system, like so many forms of Government, which, tho' varying from one another, yet are such as people may thrive and be happy under in this life, without prejudice to their eternal welfare in the next; it would, in this *hypothesis*, be a matter of indifference which Religion we embraced; and there might be an end, at once, of all our disputes and controversies. But, if it is certain that our blessed Saviour has left us a *fixed* Rule or System of Faith, and has marked out the *true and only means* of Salvation, and that, upon our hitting on these *only means*, our eternal happiness or misery is depending; then, it undoubtedly behoves us to make the most diligent enquiry where these *means* are to be found, whether in this or that Church; and whether only in one, or many forms of Worship.

FOR want of this due enquiry, many are lulled, through the dictates of a false conscience, into a fatal security under the profession of erroneous principles—*There is a way*, says SOLOMON, *which seems to a man right, but its end leads to perdition*. It was the once unhappy case of the Apostle—he acted no less by principle, and from an inward persuasion of being in the right, when he professed himself a bigotted Zealot for his Paternal Traditions, in contradiction to the Law of CHRIST, and persecuted

secuted his Ministers and Disciples, than when he afterwards was made a Convert to him, and became an open and strenuous abettor of his Law. *I made progress, says he, in Judaism, beyond the rest of my age, being more abundantly zealous for the Traditions of my Forefathers* *. But the merit of his actions, in one and the other of these circumstances, was widely disparate. After his conversion he acted from a conviction of the Truth, which it pleased God to manifest to him in a manner, and to a degree of evidence entirely miraculous, and therefore his conduct, being squared to it, could not but be right.

IN the former, tho' his actions proceeded *ex fide*, that is, according to the dictates of his conscience at that time, yet this conscience being erroneous, and the result of a rash, precipitate, and inconsiderate judgment, (since he ought to have informed himself better, and had the means of doing it) they were undoubtedly criminal.

THE Apostle himself afterwards looked on his prior conduct in this light, when he reputed himself *the least of the Apostles, because he had persecuted the Church of God* †.

Now there are two tokens, from which the truth of Faith, or the justice of a Man's Religious Principles, morally speaking, are to be gathered; and therefore deserving our notice

* Galat. c. i. v. 14. † 1 Cor. c. 15. v. 9.

in this Place; the one is when the profession of the respective principles is manifestly *disinterested*; the other, when it is wholly *divested of passion and pride*. The bent of Self-interest is so strong, that, when Faith, or our Religious Principles happen to clash with it, we find, by woful experience, (as we shall have an occasion of shewing presently in sundry instances) that they are frequently made to give way to its bias. But it is monstrous, and almost inconceivable, that a man, being in the wrong, should continue opiniatively so, when he has neither the prospect of reaping pleasure nor profit from his obstinacy. Now it is certain that self interest and temporal emoluments, within these Realms, are far from being on the Catholic side of the Question—But tho' the more predominant passion of *pride* sometimes interposing, may prevail over interest itself, and that therefore, the forfeiture of temporal advantages cannot be brought as a conclusive argument for the justice of our principles; there are yet particular circumstances, in which even *pride* cannot be supposed to have any influence; as, for example, when a Person at his expiring moments, quits the persuasion he had been brought up in, and espoused thro' the whole course of his Life, for to go over to a contrary belief: for, in this case, *pride*, considerations of honour, of leaving behind him a good name, or the precaution of not throwing himself under the imputation of levity of mind and inconstancy,

strongly plead for his adhering to his former principles. And yet, we have precedents without number, of those who have come into the Bosom of the Catholic Church, at these solemn and serious moments; and we defy our adversaries to produce one single instance of any of ours (who had been brought up from the beginning in the Catholic Communion) having deserted it at this period of Life, to embrace any other whatsoever. And tho' we do not affect to magnify this Observation, any more than the former, up to a decisive proof of the truth of our Faith, we apprehend it, at least, to amount to a presumption in its favour, of the strongest nature, and what must carry weight with every thinking Person and unprejudiced Judgment.

I KNOW the abettors of Reforming Principles generally value themselves for their extensive Charity, in holding Salvation attainable in every Christian Sect or Religion; not excluding the Catholic Church, from which they separated. But, besides, that they break thro' this their universal Charity almost in the same breath they assert it, by the grievous impeachments they lodge against the Catholic Church of *Idolatry* and *damnable Errors*, which, if their charge be just, are incompatible with Salvation; this great cry, in other respects, can be reputed no more than meer affectation; a gilt Pill, to conceal the venom of their Doctrine under a glittering cover; or a soporific Bolus

Bolus, to lull their deluded people into a lethargic security, under the profession of the most extravagant Errors.

TRUE Charity is, to be sure, the Queen of Virtues—their complement and perfection; so that, what St. PAUL says, is certainly true—*Without Charity we can be nothing*:—And therefore, a certain ingenious author had reason in saying, (if his meaning was just) *that he as little feared God would damn a Man who had Charity, as he could hope that a Priest could save him without it*. But spiritual, as well as corporal Charity and Mercy, and their respective acts, may be mistaken and misplaced; and, on the other hand, it argues no want of Charity, to deny it to objects that are undeserving it.

FOR example, a jury declaring a convicted malefactor guilty of Death, is not thereby uncharitable; nor a judge unmerciful in pronouncing against him the capital sentence—And, in like manner, if our adversaries could make good their charge against the Catholic Church, of *Idolatry and damnable Errors*, they would be so far from being uncharitable in denying Salvation possible within her pales, while she laid under that Empeachment, that, on the contrary, they must be ridiculous and incoherent with themselves in allowing it, in conjunction with such circumstances.

IN order therefore to prove our Charity to be true, we must bring it to some test; and

this can be no other than the Rules which are transmitted to us in the Inspired Writings.

Now, with respect to the point in question, *viz*, concerning *Faith*, there are two Rules explicitly mentioned and laid down in these Sacred Records—the first is, the *obligation* or *necessity of Divine Faith*—the second, its *Unity*. St. PAUL expressly avers the obligation of Divine Faith to salvation; saying, that *without Faith it is impossible to please God*. * Therefore, in consequence to this Rule, *purity of Faith* is no less necessary to salvation, than *integrity of Life*, or the observance of the Commandments; and consequently, as it would argue no uncharitableness to say that a person, living in an habitual breach of the Commandments, is in a damnable state, so to entertain the like opinion of those who are destitute of *true Faith*, is equally out of the reach of censure. And this illustration of our doctrine, concerning the *necessity of Faith*, clears us from another odium our adversaries are fond of casting upon us, as tho' we damned All that dissent from us in matters of Faith. To say that *a Man will be damned*, and to say that *he is in the state of damnation*, are judgments widely disparate—the first highly shocking! and what we absolutely disavow—the second consistent with perfect Charity. In a word,

* Ep. ad Heb. c. ii. v. 6.

Herefy, as well as *Libertinism*, are both, as I said, damnable states—But, whether PETER living, and, seemingly, dying ~~an~~ *impenitent*; or PAUL living, and dying, apparently, *out of the Church*, are *damned*, we leave to the Searcher of Hearts, the just Judge of all Mankind; and suspend our own judgments till the last Accounting Day, which will reveal every one's deeds, such as they are in themselves, and their respective lots.

THE greater part of the Reformed Churches, which adopt St. ATHANASIUS's Creed (in which all are anathematized dissenting from its respective Articles) can, by no other salvo, screen themselves from the imputation of uncharitableness, which they would fasten on us.

BUT, to return from this digression to the subject in hand, I say, that, as Faith is necessary to salvation, so this Faith can only be *one*. The *unity of Faith* is equally grounded upon the Doctrine of CHRIST and his faithful interpreter, St. PAUL. The latter, writing to the Ephesians, tells us, that “CHRIST, besides Apostles and Evangelists, has given to his Church Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints—for the work of the ministry—for the building up of the Body of CHRIST *till we all meet in the unity of Faith*—that we be no more Children wavering and carried to and fro, with every blast of Doctrine in the uncertainty
“ of

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“ of men, and their crafty contrivances to
“ deceive *.

IMMEDIATELY before, the Apostle avers the unity of Faith, in these strong, expressive terms, *There is one Body*, says he, *and one Spirit, as you are called, in one Hope of your calling, one Faith and one Baptism* †.

And the Apostle, in these positive declarations of the *unity of Faith*, only explains, or rather repeats the Doctrine of his blessed Master himself ; who establishes it in the following words, “ Other sheep I have, which
“ are not of this fold—— them also must
“ I bring, and they will hear my voice,
“ and there shall be one Fold and one Shepherd ‡.”

AND the Night before his Passion, praying for his Disciples, he adds, that he does not pray for them alone, but for those also that shall believe in me, thro’ their word, that they all may be one ||.

THESE sacred Texts appeared so clear, for the *unity of Faith*, to the greatest Lights and Doctors of the Church, that they could not bring themselves to entertain any notion of our modern Reformers universal charity, in making Salvation compatible with contradictory beliefs and systems of doctrine ; but, on the contrary, as it was a mistaken Charity and ridiculous

* Ephes ch 4. v. 11, &c. † *ibid.* v. 4. ‡ St. JOHN
ch. 10. v. 16. || *ibid.* ch. 17. v. 20.

in itself, clashing with common sense, and repugnant to the express declarations of Scripture, so they absolutely exploded it; anathematized the authors and abettors of all diversity of belief, and admitted of no Salvation to be possible out of the *one Fold of CHRIST*.

ST. AUSTIN writes to DONATUS upon this subject as follows—"Being out of the pale
" of the Church, thou *wouldst not escape dam-*
" *nation*, tho' thou shouldest be burnt alive
" for confessing the name of CHRIST*."

ST. FULGENTIUS, to the same effect, says,
" that neither Baptism, nor liberal alms, nor
" death itself, can avail a man any thing
" in order to salvation, if he does not hold
" the *Unity of the Catholic Church* †."

BOTH these Fathers only adopted, in this point, the sentiments of the great St. CYPRIAN, who preceded them long before—
He, in his treatise of the *unity of the Church*, declares, that "whoever, leaving the Church,
" cleaves to an adulteress, is cut off from hav-
" ing any share in the Promises made to the
" Church. And again he argues thus, "If
" it was possible," says he, "for any to es-
" cape that were not in the ark of NOAH, it
" will likewise be possible for him to escape
" who is not in the Church."—Thus this ho-

* AUG. Ep. ad DONAT. Ep. 204. † FUL. ch. 39,
ad Pet. Dom.

“ly Father, from one avowed impossibility
 “deduces another.

AND, in short, the quotations from these learned Doctors want no comment; they manifestly plead for the Catholic side of the question; and therefore, if we are to be reputed uncharitable for establishing the Unity of Faith, as an essential condition of Salvation; or, otherwise, for pronouncing All those to be in the state of perdition, who are not within the pales of the *one Catholic Church*, established by CHRIST; these holy Fathers come under the same censure; and even St. PAUL is not out of its reach, when he so plainly asserts the *unity of Faith* in the Texts aforecited; and, on another occasion *, has carried his zeal so far against the innovators of those early days, as to say, that, tho’ an Angel from Heaven should teach them a Doctrine different from what they had learnt from him, *that he should be anathema*; which, in the usual and most intelligible phrase, was to say, that he should incur the guilt of damnation.

IN the mean while, after we have seen the Reformers, in general, express such an utter dislike to our contracted charity, as they think it to be, of confining the road to Salvation within the narrow boundaries of an *unity of Faith*; it may be a matter of surprise to hear an abetter of the Reforming principles plead strenuously for it: and yet, I apprehend the following extracts from Doctor PEARSON, Bi-

* Galat. ch. i. v. 8.

shop of Chester, his *exposition* of the *ninth article* of the *Creed*, cannot be reconciled to common sense, in any other meaning : I will therefore give the Reader the Doctor's words faithfully, and at length, as they lie, without any comment upon them.

HE begins with asserting the *perpetuity* and *catholicity* of the Church ; which, tho' not directly affecting its *unity*, is an introduction to it, and is of too considerable a tendency to be omitted—He ushers in his belief on these heads as follows.

“ WHEN I say, *I believe the Holy Catholic Church*, I mean,” says he, “ that there is a Church, which is *Holy*, and which is *Catholic* *—Which is not only an acknowledgement of a Church *which shall be*, but also of that *which is* †—That which was when the *Creed* began, and was to continue till the *Creed* shall end, is proposed to our belief in every age as *being* : And thus, ever since the Church was constituted, the Church itself, *as being*, was the object of the Faith of the Church believing. The existence therefore of the *Church of CHRIST* (as that Church is before understood by us, p. 336, that is, as a *visible and known Society*) is the continuation of it in an *actual Being*, from the first collection of it in the time of the Apostles, unto the consummation of all things.

* Page 335. Edit. 4. † page 341.

“ A collection *uninterruptedly continued* in an
 “ *actual existence* of believing Persons and con-
 “ gregations in all ages, unto the end of the
 “ world*.

“ Now this indeed is a proper object of
 “ Faith, because it is grounded *only upon the*
 “ *promise of God*. There can be no other as-
 “ surance of the *perpetuity* of this Church, but
 “ what we have from him that built it. The
 “ Church is not of such a nature, as would
 “ necessarily, once begun, preserve itself for
 “ ever. Many thousand persons have fallen
 “ totally from the Faith professed, and so a-
 “ postatized from the Church. Many parti-
 “ cular Churches have been wholly lost,
 “ many Candlesticks have been removed †—
 “ But, tho’ the providence of God does suf-
 “ fer many particular Churches to perish, yet
 “ *the promise of the same God will never per-*
 “ *mit that all of them at once shall perish*. When
 “ CHRIST spoke first particularly to St. PE-
 “ TER, he sealed his speech with a power-
 “ full promise of *perpetuity*, saying, *Thou art*
 “ *PETER, and upon this Rock I will build my*
 “ *Church, and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail*
 “ *against it*. When he spoke generally to all
 “ the rest of the Apostles, *Go teach all na-*
 “ *tions, Baptising them, &c.* MATT. 28. 19.
 “ He added a promise to the same effect—
 “ *And lo, I am with you always, even unto the*

* Page 342. † Page 342.

“ *end of the world.* The first of these promi-
“ ses assures us of the continuance of the
“ Church, because it *is built upon a rock*—
“ The latter of these Promises gives not only
“ an assurance of the continuance of the Church,
“ but also the cause of that continuance,
“ which is the presence of CHRIST *. Where-
“ fore, being CHRIST does promise *his pre-*
“ *sence* unto the Church, even *to the end of*
“ *the world*, he does thereby assure us of the
“ existence of the Church untill that time,
“ of *which his presence is the cause*. Indeed this
“ is *the City of the Lord of Hosts, the City of*
“ *our God*. God *will establish it for ever*, as
“ the great Prophet of the Church has said.
“ Psal. 48. v. 8. †. Upon the certainty of this
“ truth *the existence of the Church has been*
“ *propounded as an object of our Faith in every*
“ *age of Christianity*; and so it shall be still
“ unto the end of the world ‡.”

FROM this avowed profession of the *perpetuity*
of the Church, he proceeds to establish its
universality.

“ The next affection of the Church,” says
he, “ is that of Universality—I believe the
“ *holy CATHOLIC Church* ||.” Which univer-
sality he expounds as follows:

“ Now, being particular Churches could not
“ be named *Catholic*, as they were particular,
“ in reference to this or that City, in which

* Page 342. † *ibid.* ‡ Page 343. || Page 345.

“ they

“ they were congregated, it followeth that
 “ they were called *Catholic* by their coherence
 “ and conjunction with that Church, which
 “ was properly and originally called so—
 “ That Church which was built upon the
 “ Apostles, as upon the foundation; congregated by their preaching and their Baptizing; receiving continued accession, and diffused in several parts of the earth, containing within it numerous congregations, all which were truly called Churches, as Members of the same Church—that Church, I say, was after some time called the *Catholic* Church; that is to say, the name *Catholic* was used by the Greeks to signify the whole †.

“ AT first then they called the whole Church *Catholic*, meaning no more than this Universal Church; but having that term some space of time, they considered how the nature of the Church was to be *universal*, and in what that *universality* did consist.

“ THE most obvious and most general notion of this *Catholicism* consisteth in the diffusiveness of the Church, grounded on the commission given to the builders of it—
 “ Go teach all Nations—whereby they and their successors were authorised and empowered to gather Congregations of Believers, and so to extend the borders of the Church

“ unto the utmost parts of the Earth. The
“ Synagogue of the Jews especially consisted
“ of one Nation, and the public Worship of
“ God was confined to one Country—*In*
“ *Judah was God known, &c.* Pf. 76. v. 1. 2.
“ The Temple was the only place in which
“ Sacrifices could be offered—But God said
“ unto his Son, *I will give the Heathen for*
“ *thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the*
“ *Earth for thy possession.* Pf. 2. v. 8. And
“ CHRIST commanded the Apostles, saying,
“ *Go ye into all the World, and preach the Gos-*
“ *pel to every Creature, that repentance and re-*
“ *mission of Sins should be preached in his name*
“ *among all Nations, beginning at Jerusalem*.*

“ Thus the Church of CHRIST, in its
“ primary Institution, was made to be of a
“ diffusive nature ; and to spread and extend
“ itself from the City of Jerusalem, where it
“ first began, to all the parts and corners of
“ the Earth. From whence we find them in
“ the Revelation, crying out to the Lamb,
“ *Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God*
“ *by thy blood, out of every Kindred and Tongue,*
“ *and People and Nation †.* This reason did
“ the ancient Fathers render why the Church
“ was called *Catholic* ; and the nature of the
“ Church is so described in the Scriptures ‡.

THIS learned Prelate having proceeded next
to shew the *true Church of CHRIST* to be al-

* LUKE, 24. 47. † Revel. 5. 9. ‡ page 348.

to Catholic in her teaching all things necessary to Salvation; and in other affections or relations less material, for which I refer the Reader to the Author himself*: He at last concludes that this Church, which being instituted by CHRIST, was, by his divine promise, to be perpetual—this Church, which, in its nature, extensiveness, and the comprehensiveness of its doctrine, is catholic or universal, that this same is also only One, which last truth he proves and enforces as follows.

“THE necessity of believing the Holy Catholic Church, appeareth in this—that CHRIST has appointed it as the *only way* unto Eternal Life. We read, at the first, that the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved †. And what was then daily done, hath been done since continually. CHRIST never appointed two ways to Heaven, nor did he build a Church to save some, and make another Institution for other Mens Salvation. There is no other name under Heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved but the name of JESUS ‡. And that name is no otherwise given under Heaven, than in the Church. As none were saved from the Deluge, but such as were within the Ark of NOAH, framed for their reception, by the command of God—as none of the first-born of Egypt lived, but such as were

* Page 348. † Acts ch. 2. v. 47. ‡ Acts ch. 4. v. 12.

“ within

“ within those habitations, whose door posts
“ were sprinkled with blood, by the appoint-
“ ment of GOD, for their preservation—as
“ none of the Inhabitants of Jericho could
“ escape the fire or sword, but such as were
“ within the house of RAHAB, for whose
“ protection a Covenant was made ; *so none*
“ *shall escape the eternal wrath of GOD, which*
“ *belong not to the Church of GOD* *.

THEN, summing all he had just said in the exposition of this Article, he proceeds thus—

“ When we profess to believe *the holy Catho-*
“ *lic Church*, every one is thereby understood
“ to declare thus much. I am fully persuad-
“ ed, and make a free confession of this, as of
“ a necessary and infallible truth, that CHRIST,
“ by the preaching of the Apostles, did ga-
“ ther unto himself a Church, consisting of
“ thousands of believing persons, and nume-
“ rous congregations, to which he daily added
“ *such as should be saved, and will successively*
“ *and daily add unto the same, unto the end of*
“ *the World* : So that, by virtue of his all-
“ sufficient promise, I am assured that *there*
“ *was, has been hitherto, now is, and here-*
“ *after will be*, as long as the Sun and
“ Moon endure, A CHURCH OF CHRIST,
“ ONE AND THE SAME. This Church
“ I believe in general *Holy*, in respect of the
“ *author, end, institution, and administration* of

* page 349 350.

“ it:

“ it : Particularly in the Members here, I
 “ acknowledge it *really holy*, and in the same
 “ hereafter *perfectly holy*. I look upon the
 “ Church, not like that of the Jews, limited
 “ to one people, confined to one nation, but
 “ by the appointment and command of CHRIST,
 “ and by the efficacy of his assisting Power,
 “ to be *disseminated through all Nations—to*
 “ *be extended to all places—to be propagated*
 “ *to all ages—to contain in it all truths ne-*
 “ *cessary to be known—to exact absolute obe-*
 “ *dience from all Men to the commands of*
 “ CHRIST, and to furnish us with all Graces
 “ necessary to make any persons acceptable,
 “ and our actions well pleasing in the sight
 “ of God. And thus, *I believe the Holy Ca-*
 “ *tholic Church **.”

I HAVE given the Reader the foregoing
 extracts, from this Protestant Prelate, at length;
 that he may judge himself of his sentiments,
 without the help of any comment upon them;
 and, indeed, they are so plain and explicit,
 that no comments can place their meaning in
 a clearer light than they appear in their own
 naked view. I'll therefore only beg leave to
 make two or three obvious remarks, as are
 directly pertinent to the points I undertook to
 prove; viz, the *necessity* and *unity* of Faith, as
 the indispensable conditions of Salvation. These
 truths he positively affirms, page 349 of his

of the Protestant Communion
 * page 350 351.

Exposition,

Exposition, as we have seen above viz, That the necessity of believing the *Holy Catholic Church* appears in this, That CHRIST has appointed it as the *only way* unto eternal Life—that there is no way under Heaven whereby to be saved, but the name of JESUS ; and that this is *no otherwise given, than in the Church* ; which he further proves by his allusions to NOAH'S ark, and other scriptural Covenants there cited. As also when he says, presently after, *that none shall escape the eternal wrath, who belong not to the Church of God*—when, lastly, he concludes from CHRIST'S promise, that *there was, has been hitherto, now is, and hereafter will be, as long as the Sun and Moon endure, a Church of CHRIST, ONE AND THE SAME*—And when, infine, that we might not mistake this Church of CHRIST, which he affirms to be *one and the same*, he had told us before, Exposition, page 345, That the *Catholic Church* is it, viz, the centre of Unity, by *a coherence and conjunction with which*, all other particular Churches are comprehended within that denomination—the Church which was built upon the *Apostles, as upon the Foundation, &c. &c.**

THE necessity, then, and unity of Faith being supposed, and, I conceive, sufficiently evinced from what has been now offered on this head from all hands, *to wit*, from Scripture, from the Fathers, and even from a learned Prelate of the Protestant Communion, as we have just

* Exp. p. 347.

heard, and that, in a dogmatical Instruction, or a professed Exposition of Faith : the next enquiry to be made, and the most important of all, is, In which Sect, Church or Congregation this *One Faith necessary to Salvation* is to be found ; whether within the Roman Catholic or the Reformed Churches : and, if in the latter, as All of them, varying from each other in points of belief, cannot be possessed of this inestimable Treasure, and therefore it can only belong to that Church or Churches, so cemented together in terms of communion, as to be *one and the same* ; the quære is, Which is that Church, so fortunate, as to have hit upon it ?

THESE are important questions ; but yet the resolution whereof may be easily come at—the whole drift of this Essay has been directly tending to it. For, if the *Reformation* is vain and groundless ; if the impeachments of Error laid against the *Roman Catholic Church* are unjust, or, which is the same thing, if the *Church* was not susceptible of a *Reform* in point of Faith, (which is what we have been endeavouring to prove) then she is, of course, possessed of the *unity and purity of Faith* we are in quest after ; and every Sect or Congregation set up in opposition to her, must be judged to be destitute of it.

THE Enquiry, therefore, Christian Reader, which I recommend to you, is neither intricate nor at a distance ; but is, in fact, no more than an application of the aforesaid Premises to this consequence.

THIS

THIS Enquiry, then, as you tender your Salvation, I entreat you to make ; but to do it seriously, and unprejudicedly ; begging, first, the Father of Lights to illuminate you ; and begging with an unfeigned disposition of heart, out of a sincere desire to be informed ; and, when informed, resolved to follow the Divine Guide, in spite of every temptation, allure-ment, or opposition. Without these requisite dispositions, you may search after Truth and not find it, as CHRIST told the Jews, that *they should seek him, and yet die in their sins* * ; as they, in effect, sought him afterwards, according to the suggestions of their corrupt hearts, when, with an unparalleled presumption, they required him, in proof of his being their Messias, to descend from the Cross, and to secure himself out of their hands—*If he is the Son of God, said they, let him come down from the Cross, and we will believe in him, &c.* †.

IN the same manner HEROD was overjoy'd at the sight of CHRIST, when brought to his tribunal, out of a vain curiosity of seeing him work a Miracle, but was disappointed of his expectations. And whosoever addresses Almighty God in the like dispositions of heart, in quest after the true Faith, may be equally sure to miscarry in his search : or, if Almighty God in his infinite Mercy, bestows on him his lights, in themselves sufficient to bring him to this

* JOHN ch. 8. v. 21. † MATT. ch. 27. v. 40, 41, 42.

knowledge, they cannot but prove unserviceable to him, thro' the obstructions he himself throws in the way: for no one sees less than he that won't open his eyes. Almighty God's graces are not of a compulsive nature, *Our Heavenly Physician*, says St. AUSTIN, *cures every infirm person who is willing to be cured, but cures none against his will.* That is, He is desirous, on his side, of the Salvation of all Men, but yet will not save any, but such as have a sincere and effectual will, themselves, to be saved.

Now, *Prejudice of Education* is one of these obstructions to the Divine light, as fatal as it is common: thro' this perspective a man looks on his *Religion* as a kind of paternal inheritance; he takes it as it is descended to him from his Ancestors, without giving himself any uneasiness concerning its truth or falshood; and without examining into the grounds and merits of it; or, if he does take any pains that way, they are levelled to no other view than to rivet him faster in his own Persuasion, and to strengthen his prejudices against every other: and yet, it is certain, there can be no plea more regugnant to common sense—none more treacherous and deceitful; because the most monstrous Sects, even those of *Mahometans*, *Jews* and *Isindels*, have an equal right to the same, and may flatter themselves to be safe under its shelter; so that, tho' St. PETER assures us, that *There is no other name under Heaven, in which Salvation is attainable (but the name of JESUS CHRIST *)* yet, if *Prejudice of Education* may be allowed

* Acts Apoc ch. 3.

to take place ('tis shocking to say, yet certainly true) there might be salvation possible in MAHOMET'S name, and every other name. Such are the dreadful consequences of this delusive plea.

HUMAN Respects, or a shame of deserting the principles a man may unfortunately be engaged in, tho' never so erroneous, and acknowledged to be such, is another obstacle to his embracing the truth, as fatal as the former; and has an affinity with it; only with this difference, that *Prejudice of Education* principally affects the Understanding, throwing it into a state of insensibility or blindness, thro' which a man, being ignorant of the Truth, determinatly persists in his ignorance: Whereas *human respects* occasions a perverseness of the will, whereby a man knowing the Truth, pusillanimously declines submitting to it. The first resembles him to a Traveller, who shuts his eyes, not to look out his Road; the other to the same, who having his eyes open, and seeing his Way, wilfully strays out of it.

THERE are few but who, within the circle of their acquaintance, have means of associating themselves with some of the orthodox Faith; from whose conversation, as well as from books they may incidently light upon, they have frequent opportunities of being disabused of their errors; and thro' the concurrence

rence of the Divine lights, many have found themselves effectually convinced of them. But, what is the consequence of all these promising beginnings, and favourable advantages, Divine Providence graciously puts before them, of attaining to Truth? Why, it may happen, that the erroneous principles they are unhappily engaged in, are hereditary, and therefore it will be deemed an indelible disgrace on themselves, and their family, to desert what has been the successive belief of their Ancestors, from time immemorial—A terrible Bar to their venturing upon such a dangerous Resolution!

THEY themselves are, perchance, persons of some consideration within their party, and looked upon as props and pillars of their Profession: *Pride*, therefore, in this case intervenes, and puts in its *caveat*: and, in short, They are sure, by deserting their old principles, of falling under the displeasure, censure, indignation and contempt of all their intimates and associates of their former Communion, who before valued, revered and respected them—Powerful dissuaves to a mind, otherwise the best disposed, from entering upon such a Religious change. And yet how weak, irrational and injurious to himself the *one* is, in declining to yield to Truth, on such insufficient motives—how unjust the *other*, in abridging his friend of his liberty upon the same grounds, the nature of the thing speaks. For, first, if the Principles a man has imbibed from *inheritance*, *education*, or any other way,
are

are, in themselves, absolutely erroneous, they are certainly better deserted than kept, and the act is so far from being blamable, that it is to be reputed a point of strict obligation and duty.

AGAIN, the affair of Salvation, or the concern of our Soul, being properly every one's own affair, that man must be a declared enemy, or a false friend, who would take upon him to obstruct you in the pursuit of it, or would attempt to divert you from embracing the means, which, in the convictions of your own Conscience, you judge to be absolutely necessary, in order to succeed: and you must be equally blind to your own natural interest to give such worldly respects or considerations the preference to it: and yet, that it is but too often the case, is as certain, as it proves fatal to innumerable Souls, and the cause of their final perdition.

EXAMPLE is often another powerful attractive to error, and a strong persuasive to continue in it, being once engaged. For instance, they see among the Members of a heterodox communion, persons of rank and fortune; persons reputed wise, learned and good in their way, and therefore instantly conclude it to be safe to tread in their steps, and to act and believe as they, whom they suppose to be so discerning, that they cannot but know which is the right, and which the wrong; and they think

to be so upright and consciencious, that they would not swerve from what they know. *I am not, say they, wiser than such and such,* and therefore *if they venture their salvation in this way, it is surely safe for me to put my Soul to the same hazard*—And, again, if the Religion they profess, happen to be the Religion of the Country, by law established, the advantage of numbers will likely be on their side; the Members of the Catholic communion, perchance very few; many of them obscure, and in every worldly respect, inconsiderable; and the Profelytes gained over to them, chiefly of the lower sort. These observations, judging from outward appearances, are enough to bring the orthodox Belief into contempt, and to raise the credit of the other; but, alas! without the least colour of Reason or Justice.

THE Jews made the same exception heretofore, against our blessed Saviour and his Doctrine—*Have any of the Chiefs, or of the Pharisees, believed in him**, was their constant cry. No, it was notorious, that our blessed Lord affected to converse with the poorer sort: multitudes of the Poor followed him—of the Rich and the Literate, NICODEMUS, JOSEPH of Arimethea, and two or three others only, mentioned in the Gospels, or that we know of: His college of Apostles was composed of twelve poor, ignorant Fishermen: He called them his *little Flock*; but yet tells them, that the kingdom of Heaven was their portion

* JOHN ch. 7. v. 48.

—Do not fear, says he, my little Flock, because it has pleased your Father to bestow on you his Kingdom *. He often insinuates the number of those that are called to be many, the chosen few. In the parable of the marriage feast, figurating the qualifications of the *Elect*, we find the *blind*, the *crippled* and *beggars* admitted to the Nuptials, while the better sort were excluded. By all these parables and examples we are given to understand, that in the election to eternal bliss, there is no exception of persons ; that they are not always the *Great* or the *wise men*, according to the world, who are so with God ; and therefore, meerly as such, they can be no precedents for us, nor a warrant for our steering by their conduct or belief : the reason is obvious ; because the *rich*, the *powerful*, the *wise* and the *learned*, are subject to sundry human passions, as well as others ; and, perchance, have stronger incitements to gratify them, than many of less learning, less accomplished, according to the world, or placed in a station of life not so conspicuous. And it is most certain, that the greatest men have been misled by their inordinate passions ; and both learning and reason made to ply to their suggestions, in favour of error. St. PAUL in his Epistle to the Romans, expressly mentions it to have been the case of the Heathen Philosophers, *who, knowing God did not glorify him as God*—

* LUKE ch. 12. v. 32.

but vanished away in their own presumptuous cogitations, and the follies of their corrupt hearts *. And they are the like passions prevailing over the dictates of *Virtue, Religion* and good *Sense*, which make the illiterate and the ignorant so fond of screening themselves under the conduct of such of the learned, as give the most favourable countenance to their own way of thinking and acting. For, as often as a person, in spite of convictions of conscience, continues in an erroneous belief, pretending to justify himself by the example of others, reputed *virtuous, religious* in their way, and *wise*; if he will but consult the real dictates of his heart, and will deal with himself candidly and impartially, he'll find, that what he obtrudes on the world, or imposes on himself, for his motive of acting, and for the justification of his conduct, is nothing else but a meer cloak, to cover other real motives, viz, *human respects, pusillanimity, self-interest, ambition, pride*, or some other inordinate passion, which are the secret springs of his actions. And very likely, those very men of *reputed probity, religion and learning*, under whose example he affects to screen himself, were actuated by the same passions.

IF man had been totally free from *passion*, he would be as little tempted to *err* in faith as to break the commandments. *Heresy* and

* Rom. ch. i. v. 21.

Immorality flow from the same source, our untamed irregular appetites, which are the greatest obstacles to our attaining to the knowledge of truth, or, it being known, to our embracing it.

THESE Passions are comprised, in Holy Scripture, under the following heads—the *concupiscence of the flesh*—*concupiscence of the eyes, and pride of life*; which, in other terms, are the *Spirit of Libertinism*—*self-interest*, and *pride*, in its several shapes or branches.

THAT the Spirit of *Libertinism* gave birth, in a great measure, to the Reformation, is well known, and what I have sufficiently evinced in the foregoing Premises: and the same Spirit may, no doubt, be a means of retaining many in the profession of its principles; because a man, immerfed in his pleasures, would chuse to be of that Religion, which puts the least check or restraint upon their enjoyment; and therefore, while there is this fundamental difference between the Catholic and Reformed Churches, the latter, calculated for ease and luxury, or at least, rendering the road to Heaven as level as possible; the former making it rugged and difficult, and imposing many injunctions on its professors, forbidding to *Flesh and Blood*; 'tis evident to which side the voluptuous man must be inclined; and nothing but a determined, effectual Resolution to quit his pleasures, can take off this bias, and leave him at full liberty to be guided in the choice of his Religion, by the lights of Faith, and the dictates of his Conscience.

AGAIN,

AGAIN, where *Self-interest* is the reigning Passion, and it happens that Religion interferes, and is an obstruction to its advantage, there is very little doubt which is likely to prevail: I say, considering man's insatiable thirst after Riches, and his violent attachment to the Goods of this world, there is great odds that *Religion* is made the sacrifice to *Interest*: as, for example, first, in a case the most desperate that can happen: where a man is so unfortunately circumstanced, that his livelyhood and necessary subsistence, and the actual support of a wife and family, is connected with, and respectively inseparable from his erroneous Profession—Good God! what a croud of difficulties do not here immediately offer themselves, to determine him from abandoning his errors, tho' never so much convinced of them? What a conflict in his breast, between *nature* and *grace*? What obstacles, seemingly unsurmountable, does not Flesh and Blood, and the World, throw before him, to obstruct a generous Resolution? How many arguments do they suggest to defeat the lights of Faith, and to frustrate the force of Divine grace? How ingenious is *self-love*, on her side, in seconding these carnal suggestions, by forming a *false Conscience*, to oppose the dictates of an upright Conscience, guided by the lights of Faith and Divine grace?—flattering him with the lawfulness and reasonableness of continuing as he is, under such desperate circumstances—magnifying, to this purpose, the mercy

mercy of Almighty God, or, rather, misrepresenting it, in order to justify his false confidence in it, and glaring presumption?

THUS gained over, by the sophisms of *self-love*, and the flatteries of corrupt nature, he easily persuades himself that it is more eligible to hazard his soul for the time to come, for the sake of present emoluments, than to secure his eternal welfare, with the loss of a temporal maintainance: he thinks it better to live at ease in this life, at any risque, than to tug to Heaven in raggs and poverty, with the additional heart-breaking reflection, of leaving a starving Family behind him. But alas! how contrary are the exprefs declarations of our blessed Saviour, that *he that doth not hate Father and Mother, and even his own Soul, for his sake, is not worthy to be his Disciple* *! How much the reverse of the directions, tho' severe indeed, which St. HIEROM gives us for our conduct; *viz, to trample on Father and Mother*; that is, to break thro' every tie of flesh and blood, when they stand in our way to Salvation, or are an hinderance to our complying with our duty to God.

To do this, it cannot be denied, requires, in such circumstances, an heroic courage and resolution—a virtue more than human; and few, very few, are they who attain to it—So great, and, respectively, almost invincible an obstacle to true Faith (without the extraordinary Grace of God) are the allurements

* LUKE ch. 14. v. 26.

of Interest, of the World, Flesh and Blood, and the ties of Nature.

AND, even in cases less desperate than that we have just reviewed, we find that convictions of conscience are made to ply to the suggestions of passion ; and *Religion* sacrificed to *Interest*. For Instance, if the gaining or saving an Estate, or, what is more inconsiderable, the shifting off some Taxes or Penal Burthens lying upon it, is put in competition with our Faith, dreadful experience convinces us how much the former often preponderate in our affections, and are apt to determine our choice. These observations amount to little less than a literal proof of that terrible sentence pronounced by our Blessed Saviour against the Rich—that *it is easier for a camel to pass thro' the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven* * ; that is, whenever our affections are immoderately cleaved to the world, they are observed to be a certain impediment to the service of God, and almost an invincible obstacle to our securing the salvation of our Souls. The reason hereof is manifest ; because no passion throws a greater mist before the eyes of our Understanding, or engrosses so much our Heart and Affections, as an unsatiable thirst after, or a violent attachment to worldly Goods and Riches—*Disinterestedness* is, therefore, a disposition previously requisite to the choice of our Religion, in order to make a good one, and sure.

* MATT. ch. 19. v. 24.

PRIDE is also another effectual obstacle to a good choice—but, omitting the various other branches and species of Pride, I only mean to consider it here inasmuch as it implies *opiniativeness* or *self-esteem*, and renders a man full of himself, and conceited with his own knowledge and wisdom, in which respect it becomes chiefly an impediment to his search after Truth. *Knowledge*, says St. PAUL, *puffs up*; that is, a *knowledge stripped of Faith, Humility and Piety*—without these guides it certainly runs astray—without these fences it becomes a sure prey to the tyranny of Pride; and is no better than its servant or bond-slave.

EVEN *Reason* itself, unless restrained by the reins of these Virtues, like a headstrong or unmanaged horse running away with his rider, hurries a man beyond the bounds of all reason; and therefore we find, by experience, that to measure Religion by pure Human Reason, is the means of reasoning it away—too great refinements in dogmatical matters lead directly to *scepticism* and *atheism*.

THE sacred Penmen are, therefore, continually cautioning us against the presumptuous attempts of squaring Faith by bare Reason, or according to the lights of human wisdom. *The wisdom of the world*, says St. PAUL, *is folly with Almighty God* *. And he represents

* 1 Cor. c. 3. v. 19.

the Evangelical Doctrine of the Cross as a scandal to the Jews, and a stumbling-block to the Gentiles *. For, neither the sublimeness of the Myſteries of the Chriſtian Faith, nor their obſcurity and incomprehenſibility, nor the humility of the Cross, are adapted to the vain notions of human reaſoning—Reason is, conſequently, no further to be conſulted, in Religious Matters, than to make us ſenſible that they are above Reason, and to direct us to a ſure *infallible Guide*, which is *the Church*; the repository of *true Faith*, and All the *neceſſary means of Salvation*; and to convince us of the *obligation and neceſſity* of ſubmitting to her deciſions in all things *relating to Faith*.

IN ſhort, it is evident, that *Pride, ſelf-ſufficiency*, or too great a reliance on our own *knowledge and reaſon*, as well as the twofold concupiſcence we have ſpoke of—the *concupiſcence of the Fleſh*, and the *concupiſcence of the eyes*—*Luſt*, and *Self-intereſt*, are eſſential obſtacles to a free enquiry into Religion. For, it is ſaid, *God hears and communicates himſelf to the humble, but rejects and diſdains the proud* †—*The carnal man is incapable of underſtanding the things that are of God* ‡—And, *Where our treaſure is, there our heart will alſo be* ||. And therefore, a man paſſionately attached and cleaved to this world, is blinded to what be-

* 1 Cor. c. 1. v. 23. † JAC. c. 4. v. 6.

‡ 1 Cor. c. 2. v. 14. || MATT. 6. v. 21. LUK. 12. v. 34.

longs to the next ; being under the government of his concupiscible appetites, he cannot be at liberty to seek after and embrace a Faith, whose morals run directly counter to their corrupt suggestions, and whose laws tend to a total subversion of their tyrannical usurpation.

IN the mean while, upon our making an impartial enquiry after this *one true Faith*, to which these Passions are so manifest an impediment, our *eternal happiness* or *misery* entirely depends ; and therefore, as I said above, it behoves us to use in it the utmost sincerity and diligence ; and to remove every obstacle to this desirable end. If the recovery of a temporal estate was the object of your pursuit, you would be thought a mad-man if you did not give it all the attention, assiduity and care, that laid in your power : and yet the affair in hand as much more deserves your regard, beyond every worldly concern, and outweighs all temporal prospects and advantages, as *finite* is exceeded by *infinite*, *time* by *eternity* ; and fleeting momentary Pleasures by everlasting torments : for, *what will it avail a man to gain the whole world with the loss of his Soul* * ? The disparity of one and the other, is too wide to suffer any bartering upon it, or demur. What, therefore, you will wish to have done, when the near approach of death removes the veils of your passions from before your eyes,

MATT. ch. 16. v. 26.

and discovers every object naked and undisguised, as it is in itself, that do at present; that is, *examine* and *resolve*—*examine* and *prove your Faith*; whether it be the *one true Faith of CHRIST*, and the road to salvation pointed out by him; and if, on examination, you are convinced that you are out of this true way, *resolve* to get into it at any cost, and in spite of all obstacles or obstructions the *Flesh*, the *World*, or the *Devil* can raise against you.

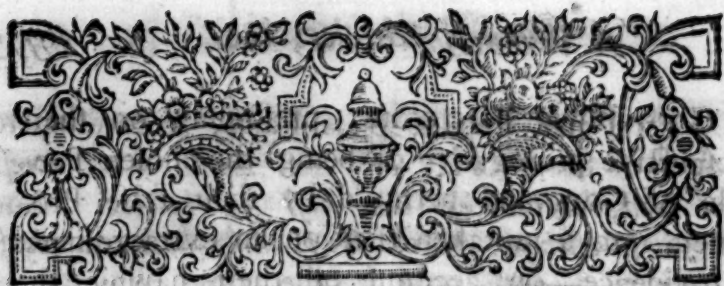
TAKE care of becoming like the *foolish Virgins*, who had the Oil of Faith and good-works to provide for their Lamps, when the *Bride-groom* appeared, and therefore were excluded the *Nuptial Banquet*—Take warning from the description the wise man gives of some after-penitents, who, seeing, at the last day, the Just going to the enjoyment of eternal Bliss, which they themselves had forfeited through their own wilfulness, will break out into these unprofitable lamentations, “We, senseless wretches! who looked on their lives as folly, and terminating in disgrace, behold, on the contrary, how they are reputed among the children of God, and their portion is with the Saints.” Sap. 5. v. 4.

’Tis in every man’s power, on this side the grave, with Almighty God’s help, which is always at hand, to ward against this fruitless after-repentance, by repenting within time, when it is seasonable, and will be acceptable.

THE

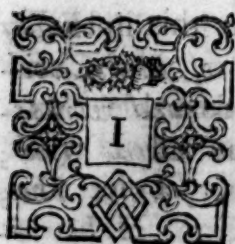
THE first step to it is Faith, according to that of St. PAUL, *He that would have access to God, it behoves him first to believe.* And again, *without Faith it is impossible to please God* *—and now is the time to make an enquiry into the *one true Catholic Faith*, requisite to salvation. Providing you do it heartily and sincerely, with an unfeigned disposition of Mind, desiring to be informed; and when informed, as I said before, resolved, in spite of every difficulty and opposition, to follow your information; you need not doubt of the lights of Heaven to conduct you to this happy term of your desires—And, if my feeble endeavours in this Essay happens to be of any service to you, Christian Reader, towards this desirable purpose, I have all I aimed at, and all I wish; and therefore, with the prayer I set out, with that I conclude—*May God, in his infinite mercy, bestow upon it this blessing, and on you the Grace to reap your advantage from it.*

* Ep. ad Heb. ch. 11. v. 6.



A

Word of **ADVICE**
TO THE
CATHOLIC READER.



IN the mean time, while we are laudably solicitous for the return of stray'd sheep into the *one fold of Christ*, where, and no where else, He will acknowledge them for *his*; and to the *unity of Faith*; without which, we just heard the Apostle tell us, that *it is impossible to please God*; it behoves us who, thro' the special mercy of Almighty God, have been privileged with the grace of this *one, sole-saving Faith*, to take care not to forfeit the advantage of our prerogative, by leading a life unworthy of our profession; disgracing a good belief by a bad Practice: for, *a Faith unfruitful of Good Works is dead, and will avail us nothing**.

* JAMES, C. 2. V. 20. 26.

THE

THE Jews, heretofore, presuming on their respective prerogative of being the chosen People of God, and betray'd by their false Prophets into a mistaken trust on an extraordinary Providence, on account of their having the material Temple among them for his public service, (at the same time that they neglected the internal service of the heart, the divine Commandments) thro' this illusion they often broke out into these vain exclamations, *We are the elect People, the Temple of the Lord, &c.!* *

BUT Almighty God sent his Prophet JEREMY to undeceive them of this gross error, ordering him to stand in the porch of the Temple, and to repeat to them often this instructive lesson. *Thus says the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel—Amend your ways, and works, and I will dwell with you in this place: (otherwise) Trust not in lying words, saying, The Temple of the Lord, &c.†.*

NOW I fear there are many nominal Members of the True Church of CHRIST, at this time of day, who are carried away by a like deceit, these deluded Jews laboured under; those, I mean, who glory in the name of *Catholic*, at the same time that, to frame a judgment of their Profession from their way of living, you might be at a loss to know whether they are *Christians*. The consequence of this illusion is twofold; both highly fatal in

* JER.

† JER. C. 7

their own nature—one *to themselves*; the other *to the Church* they have the happiness to be Members of: It is fatal *to themselves*, by lulling them into a false security on the *integrity* of their *Faith*, while they neglect the *purity* of its *Morals*; content in being materially within the pales of the Church, regardless of its precepts and discipline; which, if not attoned for by a timely repentance, proves their final perdition. 'Tis *injurious to the Church itself*, by bringing her into discredit among her enemies, and giving them a handle to slander her principles.

'Tis only in this second acceptation, that the fatal evil has a relation to the subject of this Essay. In this respect, therefore, it may be incumbent on me to take notice of it here, or at least renders me excusable for presuming to mind every Catholic of the dreadful consequence, and cautioning him against it.

EXAMPLE has ever been observed to operate more powerfully on Mens minds than Words—the most persuasive arguments lose their weight, and often miscarry entirely, coming from one who is thought to be imposing on your belief, what he does not believe himself. This is particularly experienced in Religious Matters, either with regard to Mysteries of Faith, or Moral Duties. For instance, a person deporting himself in the Church, before the blessed Sacrament, with as much heedlessness and irreverence, as if he was in the
Market-

Market-place ; should he go about, at that time, to display the proofs of the Real Presence, and to attempt to make converts to its belief, would be exploded and laughed at, when his actual misbehaviour so visibly betrays his own infidelity.

IN the same manner a Preacher is likely to make but little impression on his Audience, let the truths he delivers be never so solid, and enforced by all the strength of human eloquence, whilst his own actions give the lie to his words. And, infine, a Man who leads a libertine life, looses the reins to his passions, and abandons himself up to every kind of viciousness, would in vain endeavour to restrain others from the same irregularities, and to inculcate the practice of the contrary Virtues ; or to cry up the sanctity and perfect system of pure Morality subsisting in the Church, of which he boasts to be a Member. He must, I say, first appear to be convinced himself of the truths he would recommend, before he can hope to convince any one else—Nothing more conducive to this effect than *example* ; his *example* must therefore precede his *words*.

WE are placed here, says St. PAUL, as a *spectacle to God, to the Angels, and to Men* *. To God, as the Author of our Being, demanding our homage and strict compliance with the end of our existence—To the Angels, as our

* 1 Cor. c. 4. v. 9.

guardians and helpers, to the fulfilling this great duty, and as witnesses to our fidelity or infidelity in the discharge of it—*To Men*, as mutually aiding to one another by words and example, to the same intent.

Now, in a precedent Controversy * we shewed that the whole system of Christian Morality, and the sum of our duty to God, consists in the *Commandments* and the *Evangelical Counsels*. We also made it appear, that the Catholic Church pays a just regard to the *Counsels*, as well as to the *Commandments*, both in *Theory* and *Practice*, by *words* and *examples*; while the Reformed Churches, on the contrary, have, in a manner, laid them aside. The Church respects them in *words* by her dogmatical instructions and recommendations of these respective Virtues—she also produces *examples* of them in the multitudes of her Members, who, by the help of God, reduce them into practice. Yet, (to our regret be it said) it cannot be denied, but there are too many who practically renounce this Evangelical Morality. For tho' 'tis true, what I then observed, that the perfection of the *Counsels* are not binding in themselves, nor affecting indiscriminately, or in the same degree, persons of every state and condition; yet, it is also certain that, to act directly contrary to them, is allowable to none, which,

* Chap, 9. Sect. 1.

nevertheless,

nevertheless, as I said, to the great detriment of Religion, and the scandal of many, is but too frequently the case, as is notorious from sundry instances in almost every station of life, and relatively to every Evangelical Counsel.

For example, the total *disinterestedness* which our Blessed Saviour recommends to us, as the complement of Evangelical Perfection, has so little the attention of many worldly-minded Christians, that the contrary passion of hoarding up wealth, and acquiring riches, at any rate, seems to be their *Idol*, and to have seized full possession of their hearts. Such are many *Tradesmen*, who suffer themselves to be so entangled in their temporal concerns, as to allow no time for the main and only necessary concern of all, their eternal welfare. Such are, much more, those who set no bounds to their lust of lucre; but, by double-dealing, over-reaching, and every sinister method, endeavour to advance their fortunes. Now, for these to affect to talk of the truth and purity of our Religion, is meer *cant* and *hypocrisy*. They ought, first, to approve themselves *honest men*, before they make a boast of being *Catholics*. Religion, else, is brought into scorn and contempt, and becomes a cloak to cover vices a *moral Heathen* would be ashamed of.

THE barefaced licentiousness of many Catholics, and their loose libertine lives, as they are diametrically opposite to the counsel of
Chastity,

Chastity, so strongly recommended by CHRIST himself, and repeated by St. PAUL, the faithful interpreter of his divine Master's Doctrine; so they are no less the occasion of bringing disgrace on themselves and their profession. For, what idea can any one frame of the sanctity of our Religion, and the purity of its Morals, by casting their eyes upon such unworthy Members of it, who abandon themselves to lewdness, and are the very sink of wickedness?

THE detestable habits of *cursing* and *swearing*—the flagrant breaches of the law of Charity, in the several species of *backbiting*, *slander*, *animosities* and *Revenge*, as they run counter to the very essence of Holiness, and are the subversion of Morality, so they are a certain subject of scandal to our neighbour, and bring Religion itself into discredit, as often as they are seen to prevail amongst its professors. And, when such are farther remarked to join that extreme of viciousness with an outward shew of devotion, by going customarily to Church, at set times of public service—by conforming materially to her general regulations and points of Discipline; and even presuming to accede to the Sacraments, without shewing any fruits of amendment; what impression, can this odd inconsistency of behaviour be likely to make, on the minds of our adversaries, than that our System of Religion is a *meer farce*, or outward form; or, what is

is worse, *superstition* and *detract*? Nor is it much to be wondered at, that even the *Sacraments* themselves (tho' the use thereof is prescribed by the Church, according to the intent of CHRIST's divine institution, as a remedy for, and antidote to sin, or a means of reclaiming sinners from their vicious habits) should, thro' a contrary abuse of them, be maliciously misconstrued by our Enemies, into a license to commit sin, or, at least, as an encouragement to repeat our transgressions with less restraint. We had a recent instance of this misconstruction of the Sacrament of Penance, from a Pastoral Letter of a learned Protestant Prelate, which I have quoted above, ch. 4; where he represents the *sacramental absolution* as no more than a *meer cordial*, to sooth the uneasiness of a guilty Conscience; and to palliate, *not to cure*, our disorders. And tho' the charge, as I there shewed, is unjust, and highly injurious to the Divine Institution; yet the fruitless use many are observed to make of these *means of mercy*, is what, no doubt, gave occasion to the slander.

SELF-DENYING Principles, so strongly recommended by CHRIST, as we have seen before, and enforced by his Church, have no chance of meeting with any better fate than the other parts of her Discipline; *to wit*, to become the subject of *jest* and *raillery* to her Enemies, if regard be had to the conduct of some of her Children, who swerve so widely from them, as
not

not to comply with her *Fasts*, and the like self-denials of strict obligation. For (such is the depravity of man's mind, and the violent bias of his judgment to the side of corruption) the evil example of a *few*, transgressing and making slight of the best intentioned Regulations and Institutions, prevail over the good Example of *greater numbers*, living up conformably to them.

BUT, if the conduct of many of the Church's Members, so opposite to their Profession, is no small prejudice to her Cause; the supine *stupidity*, *insensibility* in God's service, and ind devotion of others, can be no means of advancing it—to wit, Persons so taken up with the affairs of the world, having their hearts divided between its distractions and amusements, sometimes absorpt in business; at others, rolling in a circle of pleasures—now intent on getting money, then contriving how to spend it; that amidst such a multitude and variety of worldly occupations, they can hardly prevail on themselves to afford any time to the great and necessary business of All, the concern of their Soul; and to make a provision for their eternal welfare.

ONE would imagine that they look upon this as a point beneath their care, and not belonging to their province. Now, that the conduct of such is injurious to their own Souls, and that it is an indignity offered to their great Creator, is unquestionable; because we
are

are enjoined to serve him with decency, assiduity and fervour—*Be fervent in spirit*, says St. PAUL, *serving the Lord*: And, with regard to our Neighbour, tho' it is not so disedifying to him as the barefaced scandals and licentious lives of many others, who by demeaning themselves in a manner inconsistent with the purity of morals, essential to our holy Faith, practically betray it: yet while the Church is directly injured by bad Catholics, her cause is, as I said above, neglected to be advanced, thro' the indolence and slothfullness of tepid ones, who, nevertheless, because they perchance are just in their dealings with their neighbour, and lead a life seemingly harmless and inoffensive, are therefore, by the world, usually miscalled *good men*; when, if we were to canvass narrowly their actions, and sum up impartially their *goodness*, it would be found that they have no better title to that commendation, than that they are not *notoriously bad*.

So it is, dear Christian Reader, even *goodness* may be blamable, when it is too contracted, or out of character; that is, an *inactive goodness*, where *action* may be due, and is expected—to wit, we are not born to *ourselves*, but to be also *serviceable* to our *neighbour*, both by Word and Example: 'tis a *duty* All owe to one another, as *social Beings*, particularly as *Christians*; and indispensably, when we are bound to it by the professed engagements of our calling. 'Tis a *debt* we, also,

also, owe to the Church; because, on the deportment of her Members, her credit, in a great measure, depends.

We shall fully answer all these essential purposes, if we aim at the sublime degree of Perfection our blessed Saviour recommends to us—So to let our light shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our eternal Father, who is in Heaven*; that is, being placed, as it were, on the Candlesticks of CHRIST'S Church, our Virtues should be so conspicuous, that even our enemies cannot but discover in them the pure Faith of the Church, the sanctity of her morals, and the economy and beauty of her Discipline—seeing them will be compelled to admire them, and to acknowledge in them the invisible hand of God, beginning, conducting, and finishing this Spiritual Edifice, this perfect System of Faith and Morality; and to give the Glory thereof to the Divine Artificer—Admiring them, will be stimulated to associate themselves to us, in the profession of this one and the same Faith, and the observance of the same Evangelical Morality—Thus verifying what our blessed Lord pre-ordained, and foretold should come to pass, from time to time, with regard to the future encrease of his Church, by the reduction of its rebellious Children and unbelievers into the bosom of it, when he said, *Other sheep I have, that are not of*

* MATT. ch. 5. v. 16.

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this fold——them, also, I must bring, and they will hear my voice ; and there shall be made one fold and one shepherd † : which, God grant ! may be fully and speedily accomplished, to the comfort of the Faithful ; to the confusion of obstinate Infidels and unrelenting Heretics ; to the present Glory of the Church Militant on Earth, and to the perpetual Joy of the triumphant in Heaven. Amen.

† JOHN ch. 10. v. 16.

F I N I S.

will have my voice; and I will be made
fold and am speaking in English. God's
may be fully and speedily accomplished to
the glory of the Father; for the con-
of our Lord, and in the name of the
to the great God AL 50 JA 31
and to the perpetual joy of the
Amen.

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Amen

